



MERIDIAN
BOARD UPDATE

FALL 2018

Dear Meridian Community,

Meridian's first resident-elected Board of Directors is excited to share with you our accomplishments since the May Annual Meeting and summarize our short and long-term projects and goals. What follows is a lengthy, but thorough, summary of our board meetings and bullet point discussions from organizational meetings.

First, let us start with a few important details about our Association's transition from Stratus Properties. Many thanks to our one and only resident Board member at the time, Cristian Lieneck, who volunteered many hours to make the smooth transition to our current resident-governed HOA. In addition to reviewing all of the transition documents with the best interests of our residents in mind, Cristian was our representative and advocate who made sure the following important issues were resolved before signing off on the paperwork:

- Stratus transferred \$50,000 for the construction of Bear Lake entrance off Meridian Park Boulevard. This sum has been deposited into Meridian HOA funds and is earmarked for Bear Lake improvements;
- The Bylaws of the Association were amended to reduce the extremely high quorum requirements for annual meetings (from 25% or approximately 200 households to a much more manageable and typical 10% or approximately 80 households); and
- Portions of the Bylaws and Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions and Easements (or CC&R's) were amended and can be viewed in their entirety at **mer.goodwintx.com**. To name a few amendments: the number of Board members has been increased to five (vs. three); the use of online proxies is now officially allowed; the City of Austin's watering schedule was adopted; only bermuda or zoysia grass is permitted in Meridian; and changes and clarifications concerning fencing, landscape and exterior lighting were made.

Thank you Cristian for overseeing the transition on our behalf and for your many years of service to our community as a volunteer on the Advisory Committee. We are truly grateful.

The Board's first order of business was to choose Association officers from the five residents who immediately hired Matt Moore, formerly with Stratus (Meridian Developer) now with his own consulting firm, Blue Quail Consulting, to assist the new Board with the many details of the transition. Matt has been responsible for timely reviewing and approving all new Architectural Review applications until a new Architectural Control Committee is trained to take over. We are proud to report that there have been no delays to new construction applications in the acre lots nor any other ACC Applications.

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Here are a few of the Board's accomplishments to date:

- The Board created "MeridianHOABOD@gmail.com" to receive suggestions, ideas, concerns, complaints, and kudos directly from residents.
- We reviewed all maintenance contracts, (i.e., pool, landscaping, porter/maintenance service, irrigation, pest control, and retention ponds, etc., and sent out for bid a new landscape contract. Meridian had been using a company that we found to be more expensive and less responsive than we wanted. FreshScapes Landscape Service is our new vendor and officially started on September 1st. We will be sending more contracts out for bid as time goes on.
- We authorized Goodwin to hire a professional firm to do a "Reserve Study." This firm will perform inspections and audit our property in order to provide us with a report advising how much money the HOA needs to keep in reserve (savings account) for necessary maintenance needs in the future. Basically, the study will tell us how much money we have in the bank to spend on overdue amenity upgrades and improvements vs. how much money we need to set aside to take care of predictable maintenance over the next 10, 15, 20 years. Once this study is complete, the Board will be in a good position to know how and where we want to invest in capital improvements for our community.
- Rob Gura, the Association's Treasurer, has been reviewing all financial documents and will be working with Karen to create a new budget by mid-October in order for Goodwin to send assessment bills in early December for 2019.
- The Board approved the following expenditures:
 - A new filtration system for the pool (long overdue) to help with water clarity and purity. This upgrade reduces our monthly pool maintenance expense because the new filters are less labor intensive to clean;
 - Four "Caution Pedestrian Crossing" signs with bases and flashing solar powered lights for placement at Baldwin crosswalks. This was in response to numerous, continued complaints from the community of speeding vehicles and the serious risk of a pedestrian injury.
 - A Little Library (community book sharing resource kiosk) at the pavilion which has been installed.
 - Replace all fence boards at the Amenity Center's dumpster enclosure, privacy fencing, and pool equipment privacy fence. The dumpster enclosure fence height has been increased by two feet, the gate has been repaired and the locking enclosure will be reinforced in order to stop illegal dumping. Two new signs have been installed warning that the dumpster is for official Meridian maintenance personnel use only.

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- Ongoing general maintenance and improvements to the amenity center including: addition of crushed granite where needed, yards of fresh mulch, supplemental river rocks, repair of rusted landscape edging, installation of six new LED lighting fixtures at pavilion (vandalism), new LED lights on existing fixtures, repair of pool light fixtures at restrooms, and repair of GFCI outlets at both the pool and pavilion. Several parking lot pole lightbulbs were also replaced. There remains a long list of additional repairs which will be prioritized and performed during the off-season.

Committees have been formed and members were approved by the Board. These committees have already begun meeting and are preparing reports for the next Board of Directors meeting scheduled for October 2nd. Meridian Committees are:

1. *Pool Committee & Landscape Committee* (Vito DelGatto); these committees are responsible for identifying maintenance and landscape needs and/or improvements and making suggestions to the Board.

2. *Neighborhood Watch & Safety Committee* (Rob Gura); this committee is responsible for vital crime prevention services, community awareness, and education within the community.

3. *Social Committee* (Board Liaison is Jason Verrette & Chair is Julie Gualandri); this committee is responsible for setting a yearly budget and managing social events for the community. This committee has been a constant source of community bonding experiences over many years and we owe these volunteers many thanks for all they do. THANK YOU!

4. *Communications & Welcome Committee* (Board Liaison is Dawn Bowes and Nalini Kumar is Chair); this committee is responsible for implementing a communications strategy between residents and the Board, website updates and potential new website (other than through Goodwin's site), and providing information and welcome packets for new residents.

5. *Trails & Lake Committee* (Board Liaison is Vince Heinz and Dave Christie is Chair); this committee is responsible for identifying ways to improve the area around the lake to take full advantage of this amenity. Discussions of improvements include: (1) lake entry from both Meridian Park Boulevard and Espina with wide, even granite trails in a figure-eight pattern on the east side of the lake; (2) a "catch and release" fishing pier and rustic pavilion (fish camp); and (3) promote and install trail-head markings and signage (with rules) for the abundant single-track trails throughout Meridian's 280 acres of green space. These lake and trails ideas have been brainstormed by the Committee, but further discussion and a breakdown of potential costs is still necessary before formal proposal to the Board can be made. Pending Board approval, Matt Moore will serve as consultant overseeing technical aspects of the project.

6. *Architectural Control Committee* (Board Liaison is Dawn Bowes & Matt Moore is Interim Chair); this committee is responsible for timely reviewing and approving resident applications for property improvements or new construction.

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In addition to the the above projects, the Board and Management has received (and continues to receive) suggestions and complaints from residents. Those items include:

- fix the leaning rock wall at Espina and Meridian Park Blvd.;
- street repairs from Google fiber installation;
- cameras at the entry and exits to catch license plates of possible vandals;
- installing cameras and security lights at the pool;
- installing a large ceiling fan at the pavilion;
- sidewalk repair and valve/meter box cover replacement on Meridian Park;
- mailbox kiosk maintenance needs;
- installation of additional doggie stations;
- greenbelt maintenance and sightline trimming at Espina & Alophia;
- better communication from the Board to residents;
- speed awareness signs (radar) on Cherisse and other streets to reduce speeding;
- recent nails and sharp debris puncturing tires found at the entrance(s);
- possible off-leash dog times/rules at the lake and trails;
- residents not mowing their lawns timely;
- sidewalk overgrowth leading to trip hazards for sidewalk users; and
- unsightly utility boxes.

Several items are consistently brought to our attention: Excessive number of parked cars on tight roadways (i.e., Cherisse), unsightly overgrown lawns at the school site, and potholes on our streets. Unfortunately, these are AISD, City and County issues and the best way for residents to get relief is to report the problems to them directly *and often*. There's a convenient 3-1-1 app for smart phones which the Board encourages all residents to use for City maintenance issues (street lights, potholes, disabled or illegally parked vehicles, sidewalk repair, etc). Complaints about the overgrown and ill-maintained lawns at Baldwin should be directed to AISD's Director of Maintenance for the Grounds Department, Louis Zachary at (512) 414-2209. Additionally, the Ground's Foreman for AISD is Carlos Ruedas at (512) 414-3233, and Damacio at (512) 414-0864 is the Landscape Coordinator for AISD's Service Center. Any of the foregoing AISD representatives can accept your complaints and compliments.

As our volunteer Committees continue to make long-range plans and the Board members learn their roles and responsibilities, we would like to close with a list of our collective responsibilities and what you can expect from us:

1. To provide "business services," i.e., prudently operating the common property, competitively bidding maintenance work, investing reserve funds, developing long-range plans, and equitably and efficiently collecting assessments;
2. To provide "community services," i.e., publishing newsletters, orienting new owners, holding community-wide information meetings and scheduling recreational and social functions; and

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3. To provide “governance services,” i.e., fulfilling obligations required by statutes and governing documents, resolving disputes arising from the enforcement of community policies among residents, administering design review policies, and recruiting new volunteer leaders.

As always, if you have any questions or complaints, your best (and sometimes only) option is to contact Goodwin Management at MERmanager@goodwintx.com.

Stay tuned for notices of upcoming board meetings (residents are always invited), social events, an emailed bi-monthly newsletter, and more Board Updates. Board Meeting Minutes are posted after each subsequent board meeting once they’ve been officially adopted. Please go to **mer.goodwintx.com** for the official Minutes from our July 18, 2018, board meeting and to review all governing documents amended during transition. And while you’re on the website, check out all the resources available there -- you can pay your assessments, request/replace a pool key, review governing documents, request an architectural approval application, reserve the pavilion, or make a deed violation complaint -- among many things! It’s a good resource to bookmark.

Thank you for making our community a wonderful place to live and raise a family and for giving us the honor and privilege to represent your interests.

Sincerely,

Meridian Board of Directors

Dawn Bowes, President
Vito DelGatto, Vice President
Jason Verrette, Secretary
Rob Gura, Treasurer
Vince Heinz, Director
MeridianHOABOD@gmail.com

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