

Rebuilding Garden Oaks Together

Stuart Arouty

Community Meetings: October 17 and 24, 7pm, St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 2003 W. 43rd

The conclusion of bankruptcy proceedings marks a significant moment for Garden Oaks, as it highlights the importance of reestablishing the Garden Oaks Board. Why is this important? Our neighborhood finds itself in the same predicament as the day before the bankruptcy declaration. We are still grappling with the very issues that initially led to our bankruptcy in the first place. We have decisions to make and need leadership to help facilitate them.

Historical surveys have revealed that our community wants deed restrictions that make sense for today's world and a governing body to enforce them. So, what options lie before us?

One option is maintaining our current approach of doing nothing and relying solely on the city's selective enforcement of our deed restrictions. Unfortunately, this approach has proven less than ideal in the short time it has been in effect. Lots of homeowners have encountered significant challenges, including construction delays due to a lack of clear guidance from the city. These delays come with substantial financial burdens as well. One neighbor had the unfortunate experience of their garage collapsing, and now they face deed restrictions that prevent them from rebuilding it. Additionally, there are plots within our community where, in the event of catastrophic damage to the existing home, owners would be unable to rebuild. Also, our new neighbors are currently encountering transfer fees due to confusion among title companies regarding state responsibilities. Given these issues and uncertainties, continuing with the current approach may not be the best course of action for Garden Oaks.

A more proactive approach involves replacing our current deed restrictions with clear, non-discriminatory rules that leave no room for subjective interpretation. By empowering homeowners with a precise understanding of these governing laws, they can confidently pursue their desires within these boundaries. For instance, a straightforward guideline could be 'adhere to all setback requirements and construct as desired'. Such a step would effectively resolve most of the legal disputes our neighborhood has ever faced.

Additionally, we can utilize our existing HOA to fund the passing of these new deed restrictions and to establish a new governing body. These updated regulations can also be thoughtfully designed to remain adaptable for the benefit of future generations.

The issues we're currently facing require comprehensive and permanent solutions. In an ideal scenario, Garden Oaks should be a community where residents can confidently choose to live, knowing that their homes, properties and homesteads are valued and protected. Homeowners should have assurance that their investments are secure from potential legal complications, and they should feel that the neighborhood supports them rather than works against their interests. Achieving this level of security and community support is crucial for the well-being and stability of our neighborhood for generations to come.

To further discuss our long-term options and foster community-wide dialogue, we will convene in person. Two meetings will be held at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church @ 2003 W 43rd St., on October 17th and 24th at 7 pm. Following this, we will proceed with elections by the end of the year to establish new leadership. If you are interested in a leadership position or if you have any board experience or if you just care about the direction of your neighborhood, please email Help@gardenoaks.org to find out how you can contribute!