

JANUARY 2019

BIENVILLE PLACE NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Thank you to everyone for their support of the Association this past year. With your support we were able to accomplish some long-awaited goals and have plans for new accomplishments for this coming year. A big "Thank You" to Jennifer Hamner, BPOA Secretary, for decorating the entrances and adding ribbons to the street poles for the holidays. With more time and planning this year, we'd like to add even more decorations. We'd love to have a property owner volunteer to head an annual Holiday Decorating Committee. If you are interested in heading such a committee please email us at info4bpoa@gmail.com.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting was held Wednesday evening, November 7, in the Fellowship Hall of Wesley United Methodist Church on Old Spanish Trail – across from the Middle School. To all those who contributed to the success of our annual meeting by mailing and passing along their proxy vote (26), as well as those who attended (18), THANK YOU! A minimum of 20% of the Association must be present or combined with proxy votes to hold a meeting and conduct business. We did just that with your help. Congrats to Russ Bayne who was the winner of the \$50 gift card and thanks to Alderman at Large Bobby Cox and Alderman Rob Blackman for attending.

ALDERMAN UPDATES

Question and Answer session with Alderman Cox and Alderman Blackman was enlightening. Numerous topics covered included:

- a. Completion of the light pole and LED light change out by Singing River Electric Power and the need to trim the trees around the lights and the need for more lights. Alderman Blackman will get with the City on the trees and with SREP to revisit the numerous dark places to determine the feasibility of adding additional lighting.
- b. One or two concrete street panels were replaced in the neighborhood during the year.
- c. A City sidewalk project is underway from

Davis Bayou into downtown which will include roadway striping.

d. Further talks with CSX are planned for the "Wayward Horn" project.

e. The pedestrian crosswalk and child safety at Hanshaw Rd was addressed. Alderman Blackman will look into adding a crosswalk at Bergerac, widening the crosswalks, and adding better signage.

f. Discussions about Hanshaw Rd resulted in the recommendation to add a 3-way stop sign with BPOA taking a survey (survey results - "No").

g. OSPD will do more speed monitoring on Hanshaw Rd.

h. Members commended the City for debris removal in the neighborhood prior to Halloween night and for the support of the OSPD with traffic control.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Let's try something new to share information -- town hall meetings. These meetings will be informal, no quorum required, and will be an opportunity for members to receive information or ask questions. Members will be allowed up to 5 minutes for presentation of their subject, similar to COS Board of Aldermen meetings. The Board will post signs announcing the date and time of the Town Hall meeting a week before the meeting -- no formal mailing notification. We'll also post it on our Facebook page. The first town hall meeting is planned for April 10 and one again July 30. Then the annual business meeting is scheduled for October 23 and you'll receive an official notification of this meeting through the mail.

BPOA ELECTIONS

Thanks to outgoing President Josh Drummond for serving in 2018. Since there were no new volunteers to hold Board positions for the upcoming year, Bebe Walls was voted to serve as President and Treasurer, while Jennifer Hamner was voted to serve as Vice President and Secretary. Since the meeting, outgoing Vice President Ryan Crosby agreed to return to the Board as Vice President. If anyone is interested in filling the position of President or Treasurer, please contact one of the Board members.

2019 Board of Directors

President – Bebe Walls 228-547-5449
Vice-President – Ryan Crosby 228-623-7889
Secretary – Jennifer Hamner 228-623-5130
Treasurer – Bebe Walls 228-547-5449

2019 Architectural Review Board

Chairperson – Tana Owen arb4bpoa@gmail.com
Member – Greg Horshok
Member – Buddy O'Brien

GARAGE SALE

The annual Garage Sale in September was again a success. Mark your calendars for this year's Garage Sale.—Saturday, September 14th from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. As with each year's event, signs will be posted at the Hanshaw Rd entrances and Hwy 90 & Hanshaw Rd the week of the garage sale. We'll also advertise in *The Sun Herald* for 3 days. If the 19th is a rainout we'll put the signs back out to have it the following weekend -- but no *Sun Herald* on a reschedule (not enough time).

SLOW DOWN -- WHAT'S THE HURRY

You've probably seen trucks and cars zooming up and down your street. If you were to sit on the side of the street by most any of the stop signs, you'd most likely see quite a few of the drivers who don't stop – and in a lot of cases, don't even slow down. Those drivers are not necessarily passing through. They could very well be Bienville Place residents. The posted Speed Limit in Bienville Place is **21 MPH**. We're a family-oriented neighborhood and there are lots of children who live here. Please **Slow Down, Stop** for stop signs, and **Watch Out** for the kids. It's important for us to stay safe and to keep the children safe!

PARKING

On a similar note, grass and sidewalk street easement parking presents safety concerns. There are a number of homeowners whose exercise routine includes walking on the sidewalks. Additionally, children quite often play on the sidewalks where they ride their bikes and pedal cars. When a car is parked on the sidewalk or extends out of the driveway and blocks the sidewalk, it sets up a safety hazard. Walkers and children are forced out into the street where they can easily be hit by oncoming traffic.

Street parking presents safety issues as well. Bienville Place streets are single lanes, without street parking lanes. Parking in the street causes

traffic flow issues, as well as safety issues. Vehicles parked on the street set up a blind spot for a driver's ability to see children possibly running into the street to retrieve balls, or even to cross the street. Parking on the street safety is compounded by the speeders. It's understandable that visitors will park on the street during special occasions at someone's home. When that does occur, please take the time to ensure your visitors are not impeding the flow of traffic by how they are parked and residents are encouraged to not park in the street.

UPGRADES

We've been working over the past several years upgrading the entrances. Last year we replaced vegetation, repaired sprinkler systems, and changed the sign lights to "flood lights" to allow for brighter signs at night. Additionally, a tree was removed at the Cabildo entrance to balance the plants and trees. This year we will change out the rusted light fixtures on the Cabildo entrance brick walls with new LED light fixtures and upgrade the traffic islands on Dijon.

There is white efflorescence (salt crystals) seeping from behind and between the tiles on both sides of the Cabildo entrance sign. We've tried in-house to clean it, without any success. It's not something you can just clean with a power washer, soap, water and a brush. It requires extremely strong chemicals and someone who knows what they are doing. We had a contractor clean the tiles and remove the efflorescence and seal the grout to hopefully prevent further seeping.

WHY WE MOVED HERE

A HOMEOWNER'S PERSPECTIVE

This is a very interesting excerpt from a letter the Board received in the past from one of our property owners and thinks it's worth repeating. "The restrictive covenants in Bienville Place played a large part in our decision to move here. Unfortunately, the lack of enforcement of the covenants negatively impacts the marketability and value of our homes, as it can appear to potential buyers that we are a neighborhood in decline."

REPORTING A VIOLATION

With that in mind, property owners can report a suspected covenant violation to the Board by submitting the suspected violation to the Board in writing. Send an email to the Association email address info4bpoa@gmail.com. Another option would be to send a written request through the mail to BPOA, PO Box 0071, Ocean Springs, MS

39566-0071. A signature is not required if you would like to remain anonymous. The Board has tried to stay on top of violations this past year and is working to correct recently noted violations.

REACTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS

Ever wonder what the reaction is when a homeowner with a covenant violation is contacted by a Board member or an ARB member, with either written or face-to-face communications? Sometimes the homeowner may apologize and correct the violation or just correct the violation with no further contact. Sometimes a homeowner will take the position of “Others do it so why am I being singled out?” or, “There are other people with violations around here and I’m not fixing this until you get the rest of them fixed.” Each request to the ARB and Board is unique and a perceived violation could possibly have been granted an exception based on the particular circumstances of that property, therefore, making it an exception, not a violation. It’s an unenviable position for the Board of Directors and ARB to contact property owners about covenant violations, particularly repeat violations, which come with fines.

PURPOSE OF THE ARB

Why do we have an Architectural Review Board? They are vested with the power to control the buildings, structures and other improvements placed on each Lot for the purpose of ensuring the development of the properties as an area of high standards. Refusal of approval of plans and specifications may be based on any grounds, including purely aesthetic. The ARB works closely with property owners to try to accommodate their requests, while maintaining the high standards established by the covenants. Without their outstanding work, Bienville Place could look like a “neighborhood in decline”. Help us maintain the high standards in Bienville Place by abiding by the existing covenants and coordinating exterior changes with the ARB as outlined in the covenants.

OUTSIDE HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Property owners are responsible for obtaining approval from the ARB for most changes or improvements to the exterior of their property. Matters requiring approval include, but are not limited to the following: new home construction, additions or changes to existing homes, i.e., decks, sun porches, enclosures of existing porches, swimming pools, exterior color changes, roofs, installation of satellite dishes, and fences, just to name a few. A penalty of fifty (\$50) dollars may be

assessed if changes or improvements are made prior to plan approval by the ARB. If you make any exterior changes or modification to your property, you **must** obtain ARB approval of the plans before you begin work. Contact the ARB at arb4bpoa@gmail.com or by writing to BPOA, PO Box 0071, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0071. An ARB member will set up an appointment with you to discuss your project and then go from there on the approval process. Do not begin a project without first receiving approval from the ARB. It is not an overnight process so you should contact the ARB during your initial planning stage. Just because the City issues a permit for a project does not mean it will be approved by the ARB. The City does not monitor or control subdivision covenants, so they are not aware of what may or may not be ARB approved.

DUES AND LIENS

Collecting dues and processing liens is very time-consuming and expensive. If dues are not paid on time the Treasurer contacts property owners, in writing, whose accounts are delinquent to allow them the opportunity to bring their account up to date, which includes a late fee, to preclude lien actions. In 2017, liens were processed against 9 properties and 7 liens were processed against properties in 2018. Yes, the 7 liens from 2018 were also on the list of properties where liens were processed in 2017. We collected \$440 last year in \$10 late fees, as well as monies from liens.

TRAILERS - RVs - BOATS - JET SKIS INOPERABLE VEHICLES

Storage of such items must be screened from public view, either within the garage or within an approved storage facility. When owners of these items park them in their driveways, in the street, or on the grass in their yards, even for a temporary period of time, visitors or potential homebuyers get the impression that it must be alright. It also turns into a domino effect amongst homeowners and renters that results in the Board issuing covenant violation notifications and fines.

FENCES

The fence covenant varies based on the location of the property. Bienville Place subdivision was built in 4 phases. The fence covenant varied between phases and fences that existed when their phase joined Phase I were granted grandfather status. That’s just one reason why it is important to work with the ARB on fence requirements. Different

rules could apply to different phases. Any changes to your fence needs to be coordinated with the ARB, that includes new and replacement fences.

NUMBER OF PETS

According to the Covenants, no animals, livestock, or poultry of any kind shall be raised, bred or kept on any Lot. The exception is dogs, cats or other common household pets of the domestic variety. These may be kept provided they are not kept, bred or maintained for commercial purposes. There is a limitation on the number of animals a household may keep – two (2). That is a combined total of all animals.

CITY PET ORDINANCE

The City pet ordinance requires owners to clean up after their pets. There is also a pet leash requirement. Complaints associated with leash violations, noise nuisance or cleaning up behind pets should be addressed to the Ocean Springs Police Department, not to the Association.

RECENT SURVEYS

Homeowners returned 59 surveys on solar panels and a possible 3-way stop sign at Hanshaw Rd and Cabildo Pl. Thank you for your responses. Having your input was important. The results were:

3-Way Stop No - 35 Yes - 19 No Comment - 5

Solar Panels No - 13 Yes - 39 No Comment - 7

LAKE IBERVILLE

Bienville Place subdivision property owners and residents are welcome to fish from the dam. The banks of the lake are private property. If you want to fish from the banks, you should ask the property owner for permission. Don't just assume it's alright. Lake Iberville is a private lake and is closed to the public. If you do fish Lake l'berville, please catch and release since the fish from the lake should not be eaten.

E-MAIL - FACEBOOK - WEBSITE

info4bpoa@gmail.com is our e-mail address.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/info4bpoa/>

All Bienville Place residents and property owners are encouraged to join our FB page. Membership is limited to Bienville Place subdivision residents and information shared is Bienville Place-specific information.

There is also a shared interest FB page called **Bienville Place/Heron Bayou Neighbors** It's a

good idea to be a member of both groups. They often share information that is helpful to Bienville Place subdivision residents.

www.BPOASSN.com is our website. There are links on our website to important numbers throughout the city, county, and state, in addition to contacts for the Association and numerous other helpful topics. Suggestions for content and changes are gladly accepted.

HOW MANY?

Occasionally we are asked "How many property owners are in our subdivision?". The answer is 192. There are 195 properties but 2 own adjacent lots and our Association owns the dam.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

The program was implemented by the fabrication and installation of signs throughout the neighborhood. It's a simple program: If you see something suspicious, call the OSPD. The BPOA Facebook page is used to share information on thefts, missing or wrong deliveries, lost and found animals as well as possibly suspicious individuals in the neighborhood.

STREET ADDRESS

It is very important to ensure you have an address posted prominently on your mailbox or your house. The post office needs the information on your mailbox and emergency vehicles and visitors need to easily see your address as well. There are still homes without any identifying address information on either their mailbox or house.

MAILBOXES - DAMAGE AND THEFT

Is your mailbox door damaged or missing? There are companies on the internet that sell mailbox inserts. It slides into your existing mailbox and you then have a "new mailbox". ARB approval is not required for the inserts. If you need to replace the entire mailbox structure ARB approval is required.

Watch out for mail thieves. One of our residents recently had outgoing mail stolen from his mailbox. Contents stolen included bill-payment checks. The incident was realized when the bank contacted him about a suspicious check. Thanks to him for sharing this incident with us

COVENANTS AND BYLAWS

A proposal of changes to the current Bylaws was mailed to all Association members with the announcement of our November 2018 meeting for review in advance of the meeting. Recommended

additions were underlined and deletions were lined through. The proposed changes to the Bylaws were discussed but a consensus of changes to the entire Bylaws were not agreed upon. There was great input from the members in attendance that highlighted some inconsistencies in the proposed changes that require further research. It was discussed that a survey would be mailed to members regarding interest in serving on a workgroup to continue the process of reviewing and making recommended changes to the Bylaws and Covenants. There were 9 individuals who responded that they would like to be part of that workgroup. Thanks to those who volunteered. It's not something that will happen overnight. Bebe Walls, Committee Chair, will contact the workgroup volunteers and schedule a meeting to begin the rewrite process. A copy of the current Covenants and ByLaws are on our website at www.BPOASSN.com.

TRASH

The City recently mailed guidelines on trash pickup. A copy of that guidance is posted on our website at www.bpoassn.com. We also have the holiday schedule for WastePro posted on our website indicating the holidays WastePro is closed and there is no trash or recycling pickup. When their celebrated holiday falls on a Monday our trash pickup day is moved to Tuesday for that week.

Helping your neighbor with their trash cans would probably be appreciated. Our trash and recycling receptacles should be removed from the street and sidewalk by the evening of trash day. If you see your neighbor's trash cans are still out in the evening, being neighborly and moving them up near their garage would be a nice gesture.

YARD MAINTENANCE

A lot of our residents use a contractor for yard maintenance and a lot maintain their own yards. Either way, it is important to ensure when the cutting and edging is complete to remove the clippings from the sidewalks and street. Please do not blow the grass clippings into the street or down the storm drain. Blowing the grass clippings into the street detracts from the cleanliness of our neighborhood, as well as embeds the grass into the street cracks (grows grass and weeds in the street). The storm drain water flow can be impacted by wet grass in the drainage pipes. Please ask your contractors not to blow the clippings into the street or the drains as well. Lastly, be considerate of

neighbors with the noise levels and times of yard maintenance.

HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

Have you filed for your Jackson County Homestead Exemption? It is something you may want to consider. If you qualify (most BPOA homeowners qualify), it can significantly decrease the amount of annual county taxes you pay.

To qualify for a homestead exemption the residence must be owner occupied. This is the key -- it must be **owner occupied**. The window for filing for Homestead Exemption is between January 2 and April 1. Once you receive your exemption, you won't file again unless your status changes.

<https://www.co.jackson.ms.us/DocumentCenter/View/471/Documents-Needed-to-File-Homestead-Exemption-PDF?bidId=> provides a list of documents required when filing for the exemption.

Questions on Homestead Exemption can be answered by calling the Jackson County Tax Assessor Office at **(228) 769-3070**.

GOLF CARTS AND 4-WHEELERS

A 4-wheeler is not authorized on the streets of Ocean Springs. That includes the streets of our subdivision. Golf carts have different rules. A golf cart can be driven on the streets **ONLY** if it is fully street legal (windshield, brakes, brake lights, headlights, turn signals, etc). A copy of the guidance on Golf Carts and 4-Wheelers is on our website at www.bpoassn.com.

ANNUAL DUES FORM

Our dues are normally payable by January 30th. This year the pay not later than date is extended to February 15th.

Your phone number on file with the Association is necessary in case of an emergency. Your phone number will **NEVER** be shared with anyone other than the Board of Directors, and that is only in the event they need to call you. If someone asks for your phone number you will be contacted by a Board member to either have you call the person or ask your permission to share your number.

BUDGET

How are our dues spent? A "detailed" budget projection and expenditure report are included on the last page to show how dues are spent.