
July 2018 NEWSLETTER



MONTAGE NEWS & PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Tom Tousignant



We have a problem within Montage – Apathy or is it merely lack of desire for community involvement.

This Newsletter and many pleas by the Board and the Committee Chairpersons for volunteers and more involvement have fallen on deaf ears. No response. No volunteers. No involvement. – Indicates you don't give a SHxxT about what is going on in your community and your property values????

DO you want to provide your input toward the direction of YOUR community? You need to get involved. If we all participate, it will not take much of anyone's time or effort and you will have the satisfaction of providing meaningful contributions and direction to the Montage HOA. Also we ALL will receive the satisfaction of achieving perusing the unified direction of the whole community rather than a fumbling but dedicated Board of Directors doing the best that they can to do their elected fiduciary responsibility of making decisions for the communities' and your benefit.

Please see the Contact Information at the end of every Newsletter for where you can report problems and volunteer.

I look forward to a productive year of participation by all in making Montage at Mission Hills the community we are envied for living in, but it is not going to happen and I'm going to fall on my face if I and your Community Committees do not get help.

Status of Litigation

The lawsuit filed by owner Nancie Brown, entitled *Brown v. Montage at Mission Hills, Inc.* (Case No. PSC 1801783) is still pending. In the lawsuit, Ms. Brown claims that she is not subject to the leasing restriction in the Association's CC&Rs and Rules stating that any lease must be for a term of at least 30 days.

The parties will soon begin the discovery process, meaning that each side will exchange information through interrogatories, document requests, depositions, etc. There will be a Case Management Conference on September 24, 2018. At that time, the Court will likely set a trial date for some time in early 2019.

ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE REPORT

PERIMETER PALM TREE PLAN PROGRESS

By Tom Tousignant

On June 6, 2018, the Cathedral City Architectural Review Committee approved Administrative Design Review No. 18-007 for the modification of the existing perimeter landscaping (removal and replacement of the existing Date Palm trees per the approved Landscape Plan) for the Montage at Mission Hills HOA, subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. The removal and replacement of the Date Palm trees shall comply with the approved Landscape Plan. Any deviation from the approved Landscape Plan shall be submitted in writing and approved by the Planning Manager.
2. An inspection shall be requested from the Planning Department at such time that the Date Palm tree(s) are removed and replaced. Per the current fee schedule, there will be an inspection fee of \$60 for each inspection.
3. The existing landscaping, including inert material, shall be protected in place and replace in kind if needed.

This approval will expire on June 6, 2020 unless the installation of the landscaping has begun in compliance with Section 9.78.100 of the Cathedral City Municipal Code.

Per the above we will need to request an inspection each time we plan to remove and/or replace palm trees in accordance with the approved plan. Also, we will need to request an extension if we do not complete the plan before June 6, 2020.

Our Landscape Architect failed to inform them that our intent is to implement the Palm Tree Plan over the next ten years in accordance with our funding plan approved along with the 2018 Budget. That funding plan was developed to avoid the necessity of any Special Assessments to homeowners.

The next step in the project will be completion of the final plan from the Landscape Architect of an irrigation plan and low voltage lighting notes/modifications for working drawings.

See related article below on the new 2018 arborist study of the date palms.

Watch for the next progress report in the September Newsletter.

2018 Arborist Study of Perimeter Date Palms

The Board requested a new firm to provide an independent arborist evaluation of our perimeter date palm trees. This study was performed by Tree Rite Professional Arborists. The report was prepared by Robert M. Downing, ISA Certified Arborist WE-5664. Their scope and findings are below:

Scope: Evaluate the condition of the 102 date palms on the exterior and in the retention basin inside. The evaluation was to be performed by visual inspection from the ground only. No sounding of trunks or inspection of palm heads will be conducted.

Findings: All of the palms exhibit signs of drought stress. There is a notable reduction in trunk caliper starting at between 30' and 50' on all of the palms. Many have continued to grow in height at a normal pace at this reduced caliper for 20'-30', while others appear to have stopped growing, or slowed considerably. Irrigation is being administered to these palms by way of either two 7gph drip emitters, or two 0-13gph adjustable micro bubblers per palm.

There are no visible signs of cracks or cavities in the roots, trunks or heads of any of the palms.

Conclusions: All of the Palms on the perimeter and in the retention basin need more water. With the existing irrigation, the water would need to run for 6-12 hours per day on average to provide the approximately 80 gallons of water per day required by Date Palms. Another option would be to retrofit the system with Two- four 2gpm flood bubblers per palm. This would reduce run times down to 10-20 minutes per day on average.

I recommend establishing a palm removal/replacement program immediately. This plan should be established with a goal to remove all of the existing palms within five – ten years.

Palms #35 and #65 should be removed immediately as they pose an extreme risk potential.

Palms #7, #14, #21, #27, and #36 should be considered for removal as high priority.

The remainder of the palms should be scheduled for removal on a size basis as the budget allows. The palms with the most growth above the drought collar have the highest potential for failure. Assuming that the palms cannot all be removed at the same time, I recommend an annual inspection and evaluation to determine if any new factors arise that would dictate reprioritizing the removal schedule.

There are some contentious findings – specifically the watering of the palms that the Board will be discussing with Conserve LandCare who we paid \$6,900 to improve last year. But the majority of the findings are supportive and consistent with the findings of the 2017 arborist evaluation.

The Board will be considering the recommendations of this study and directing appropriate actions at their forthcoming meeting July 12, 2018.

Another independent professional arborist study will be funded in the 2019 Budget to ensure the most complete and up to date information is available to the Board for forthcoming decisions regarding future actions required toward ensuring the safety of the perimeter homes and their walls and backyards. Also to ensure the scheduling of manageable costs of implementing the Palm Tree Plan to avoid Special Assessments or unexpected costs to Montage homeowners.

New Entry Gate System

The new entry gate systems have been installed, with a minimum of inconvenience. The main problems seems to have been with the service workers lined up at the gate, because no one advised them they would need to use the # sign before entering their code. This was a short-lived problem and they have all seem to have received the message.

Another brief problem encountered was with a loud squeal through the gate phone system to homeowners. This was caused by feedback through the intercom and was fixed shortly after it was reported.

If you encounter any other problems, please report them promptly to PPM or a Board member.

We still need a volunteer to replace Nick Nickerson in continuing programming of homeowner's vehicles for entering the gates. This effort typically requires about 10 hours per month helping homeowners at each of the gates. The alternative will be homeowners being required to pay our gate maintenance provider to perform the necessary programming. That service will be not as prompt or convenient as it would be through a volunteer.

An alternative available to homeowners is to start using transmitters rather than their car buttons. I still have available new (small 1 ¼" x 2 ½" x ½" will attach to your key chain) transmitters for sale at \$35 each. I am still looking for a volunteer to assume responsibility for distribution or I will give them to PPM who would probably sell them for \$50 each.

Approved Rio Del Sol Development Modifications to Impact Montage Homes **By Scott Reese, Community Volunteer**

On June 6, the Cathedral City Planning Commission approved two changes to the previously approved 1997 Rio Del Sol Planned United Development, which may affect residents in Montage. Rio Del Sol is contiguous to Montage along the seven lots that comprise the Montage west property line (Monet and Picasso Courts). Montage homes back up to smaller Rio Del Sol lots.

A portion within Rio Del Sol is undergoing development by a joint venture of the Holt Group (developer from Vancouver, Washington) and the Rilington Group (builder from La Quinta). They requested changes that will apply to approximately 220 lots and architecture remaining undeveloped in Rio Del Sol since 1997. These lots are located in five proposed neighborhoods situated in primarily the east and south areas of the development, contiguous to Montage HOA and five other HOA's. This leased property was originally planned and platted before Montage was developed and the development has been in virtual stasis for over 10 years. Development of Rio Del Sol is subject to an Indian land lease, which expires in 2071.

The Rilington Group, proposed two modifications. The builder requested a change to update the architectural style of homes to reflect current market trends introducing more contemporary architectural stylings along with more typical Spanish and California Styles which seems appropriate. The second request was the proposed reduction of rear building setbacks on a few homes from the approved 10' to a new 5'. This would occur on only two lots contiguous to Montage.

There are three different neighborhood styles of architecture proposed which vary based upon lot size and home size. Those homes to be constructed contiguous to Montage are in Montecito Group in the middle-sized range of homes from about 1,400 sf to 1,700 sf comprised of two bedroom and den or three-bedroom floor plans. Lot sizes in the Montecito Group generally vary from approximately 4,000 sf

to 5,000 sf and feature small front and rear yards with minimal side-yards. Rilington is currently building the Domani development <https://www.domanipalmdesert.com> in Palm Desert behind the Interstate 10 Auto Mall which includes homes of a similar style and size to those proposed for Rio Del Sol.

Montage Residents Scott Reese, John Wilhite and David Busick were in attendance at the public hearing and presented testimony setting out the anticipated impacts of the proposed five-foot building setbacks. They also presented positive strategies to help reduce development impacts to improve inter-neighbor and HOA relations. Approximately 25 people and several HOA's presented testimony in opposition various aspects of the development. The proposal was supported by approximately 10 Rio Del Sol residents.

The testimony presented by Montage residents was proceeded by private meetings with City planning staff and the developer's project manager and landscape architect and included Montage proposals for:

- protection of solar access,
- selection of floor plans and roof lines to minimize view impacts,
- installation of higher walls to reduce auditory impacts and protect visual intrusions,
- and, the creation of a new somewhat smaller home floor plan to allow for preservation of the 10-foot setback.

The Montage Group presented written recommendations to the Planning Commission at the meeting. No position has yet been taken by the Montage HOA Board.

As a result of the testimony of Montage residents, the city planning staff and the Planning Commission revised the developer's proposal and the planning staff's recommendation during the meeting to provide a minimum rear yard setback of seven feet instead of the propose five-foot depth. The revised proposal passed unanimously.

Building within the Rio Del Sol development is probable within the next four to six months. The developer is now cleared to file for building permits and begin construction of improvements and models. Based upon discussions with city staff and representatives of the developer, it seems that development of Montecito neighborhood home sites adjacent to Montage would be a second or third phase and not occur for 12 to 18 months, however this is not certain.

We are reservedly optimistic that the developer can be moved to further modify the design of one home layout to allow for a slightly smaller footprint on two or three lots to preserve a minimum 10' setback. Resident's will be requesting the Montage HOA take a position in support of the current Montage resident interests reduced impacts to Montage homeowners and residents. If you are interested in supporting this effort contact Scott Reese at scott.o.reese@gmail.com.

QUEEN PALM CARE

By Scott Reese, Community Volunteer

Drawn from Moon Valley Nursey and other sources

The best way of dealing with the many issues associated with queen palms is consider never using them in your home's landscape. If your queen palm dies, you may want to consider replacing it with another variety of palm. Consider the use of California Fan Palms, Mexican Fan Palms and the various varieties of date palms and Mediterranean palms. Here is why.

The Queen Palm (*Syagrus Romanzoffianum*) is a medium sized palm that was originally brought to the U.S. from cooler, wetter Brazil. Queen Palms can be grown in many parts of the U.S. where winter

temperatures do not go below 20 degrees very often. In the Western United States, Queen Palms are everyone's favorite for lush, tropical feature trees in many types of landscapes.

Queen Palms are ideally sized (15' to 20' tall) for many landscape uses. The queen palm produces some of the longest fronds, reaching 20 feet under ideal conditions. The center rib is lined with three foot long pendulous leaflets that are crimped for an interesting foliage texture. They do not grow too tall and overbearing, but they're not tall enough to be considered a dwarf palm. Queen Palms are very clean and generally easy to grow, making them the number one choice around pools, patios and courtyards. They do not have an invasive root system, so proximity to sidewalks or pool decks is not a problem.

Here in the low desert, queen palms have always been borderline, even under standard irrigation in normal rain years. Now with extended drought and irrigation interruption, most queens went from borderline to absolute decline over this last year. The problem is that desert queen palms need the supplemental rain from monsoons which don't always come. They also have to contend with recently abnormally dry winter and absence of late summer humidity. This combination has robbed both plant and soil of every bit of residual moisture.

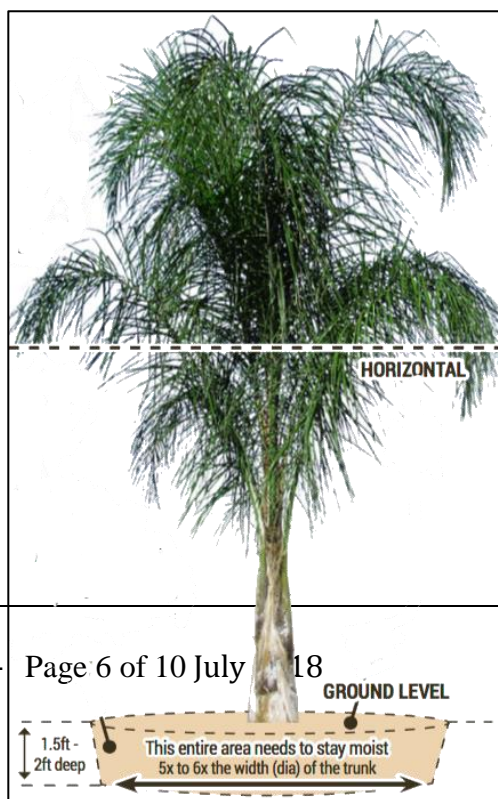
Where new drought tolerant landscapes replace a water demanding lawn, the queens adjacent that thrived on the turf irrigation may be forgotten when irrigation systems are modified. Once conditions change queen palms may quickly demonstrate browning of their leaves incrementally as internal moisture declines. Dieback in any plant is the way they reduce the demand for water generated by the leaves

A healthy queen should have a lush head of long hair and flower annually if provided enough water. If suffering she will brown out, drop fronds, quit flowering or over flower, and the head dies back gradually. After all fronds have died the trunk may live for a time, but there is no way to predict survival under those conditions. However, queen palms are super-fast growing so they can come back just as fast if there is still life in the trunk.

WATERING

Queens don't originate in such dry climates so they're not geared for prolonged summer drought. Though most people consider a Queen Palm a tree, it is more closely related to grass in structure and growth characteristics. Accordingly, watering requirements and scheduling will similar to those of grass. The biggest mistakes made in watering Queens are not watering often enough not watering wide enough.

Given that Queen Palms are similar to grass, they do not have extremely deep roots (1' to 4' Avg.) They do, to most people's surprise, have fairly wide roots (usually at least as wide and the fronds). As a Queen Palm grows, its root base gets wider. Most of the water absorption takes place at the tips of the roots. It is important to water adequately around the entire root base each time water is applied. A good rule of thumb is to water an area at the base of the tree at least five times as wide at the diameter of the trunk. (e.g. a 1-foot wide trunk should be watered at least 5 feet wide) When watering by hand or a drip system, this area should be saturated to a depth of at least 3 feet. To check saturation, you should always be able to insert a long screwdriver into your soil 2 to 3 feet away from the trunk. If you can't, water more often and wider.



Another common mistake is failing to move drip system emitters wider as the tree grows. In many cases where Queen Palms are struggling, the drip emitters are right against the trunk many years after the tree was planted! How often to water Queen Palms will vary somewhat with soil conditions, rainfall and temperature. Use the following schedule as a guide, but make adjustments, if necessary, based on the above-mentioned variables.

Pruning

Only remove fronds that hang downward (below horizontal line). Simply cut frond about 2"-3" from trunk using a cut that is parallel to the trunk. During summer months, it is common to get some brown tips. It is OK to just trim off the brown and leave the green portion of the frond. Trimming is usually necessary once or twice a year.

Feeding

Queen palms enjoy fertile, well-drained soil. Much of our soil in the low desert is high pH (alkaline), high clay content, and poorly-drained. The soil also lacks organic matter and due to the high pH, many micronutrients required by queen palms are chemically tied up in the soil and unavailable to the trees. The single most effective step in assuring queen palm health is to improve the planting site conditions, that is, soil fertility, soil drainage and irrigation practices. Regarding soil fertility, queen palms enjoy regular fertilizing. They require micronutrients such as iron, zinc, magnesium and manganese. These are available in fertilizers specially formulated for palms and other tropical plants. Feeding is recommended on three or four times per year.

Regarding drainage, plant trees in well-drained areas if possible. Drainage on established trees can sometimes be mechanically improved by augering or drilling with a 2-4 inch bit to a depth of at least 12 inches. The use of gypsum can be helpful to improve water penetration.

For established trees, you can accomplish both the above objectives by a process called vertical mulching. Once holes have been drilled around your palm, you can backfill them with a mixture of fertilizer and gypsum combined with pea gravel, sand or perlite. The filled holes aerate the soil, improve drainage, and deliver nutrients via the fertilizer. Soil sulfur can also be added to the mix to help lower pH.

Disease

Queen palms are occasionally subject to an air-borne fungus that attacks the growth bud of the palm. The resulting condition is called Palm Bud Rot or Palm Crown Rot. A queen palm's growth bud is located at the top and center of the queen palm just below where new leaves emerge. The fungus causes damage to this bud leading to the collapse of the new growth. This collapse of the top fronds is the most common symptom of fungal activity. The damage can be extensive and if the tree does not die, recovery is slow, requiring a season or two for the tree to replace the lost foliage. For further information about threatening these diseases search the internet.

Queen palms also suffer from micronutrient deficiencies that can mimic fungus symptoms, so you need to investigate carefully before undertaking a treatment plan and unnecessarily applying toxic and expensive fungicides. (A deficiency of manganese, for example is responsible for a condition called Frizzle Top. Frizzle Top causes fronds to be dwarfed or deformed when they unfurl from the central growth spire at the top of the palm. You will also want to research Frizzle Top before discussing a possible treatment with your arborist.

ARCHITECTURAL VARIANCE REQUEST

Please remember that each of us neighbors need to fill out a variance form; in order to do any work on your homes. Contact either PPM or a committee member.

A & L COMMITTEE MEMBERS - WANTED



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

By Mike Gialdini, Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair

The warmer heat and more winds have arrived- Please stay hydrated!
Do you have many cases of water stored and rotated monthly in your home?
In case of an emergency, please take your family to Chagall Ct and wait for emergency assistance.

WELCOME COMMITTEE REPORT

By Gary Roman, Welcome Committee Chair



Gail Kramer – 36205 Chagall Ct
Norman Giere – 36272 Chagall Ct
Donna Forman & Celeste Jeckel – 36282 Dali Dr
Robert & Dawn Williams – 36398 Dali Dr

MORE VALUABLE INFORMATION

THAT'S SUSPICIOUS...



If it does not like right, please report it!

If it has anything to do with the common areas, please call PPM direct.
If it looks like foul play, please contact Cathedral City Police Department.

STREET SWEEPING ON FRIDAYS

Remember to remove your vehicles off the streets on FRIDAY, as this is when the street sweeper comes. Please have your vehicle on your driveway or in your garage and this also includes your houseguests.



NEXT HOA BOARD MEETING

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Thursday, July 12, 2018 at 9:30 a.m. at the offices of Personalized Property Management, 68-950 Adelina Road, Cathedral City, CA 92234.

Meeting notices and agendas are posted on the community message board; located on the wall at the Da Vinci/Van Gogh curve or on the web site at least four days before the meeting.

HOA Meeting
 Date

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Community Management

Shelly Ruegsegger, Community Manager - sruegsegger@ppmineternet.com or 760.325.9500
Stacie Cowie, Assistant Community Manager - stacie@ppmineternet.com or 760.325.9500

Association Board Members

Tom Tousignant, President - td2znot@aol.com
Alan Horwitz, Vice President - ahorw58518@aol.com
Leo Schlesinger, Secretary - lschles694@aol.com
Curtis Beyer, Treasurer - curtbeyer@gmail.com
Gary Roman, Director - grroman@aol.com

Association Committees

A & L Committee – Liaison: Gary Roman or 310.600.4279
Emergency Preparedness/Neighborhood Watch – Mike Gialdini, Chair MikeGialdini@gmail.com or 760.413.0100
Welcome Committee – Gary Roman, Chair - grroman@aol.com or 310.600.4279
Web Master – Scott Reese – scott.o.reese@gmail.com
Website – www.MontageatMissionHills.org

CATHEDRAL CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES CALENDAR

City of Cathedral City - Recycling, Trash & Energy page www.cathedralcity.gov
To have a Guide and Calendar mailed to your home please contact Deanna Pressgrove with the City of Cathedral City at 760.770.0369 or email dpressgrove@cathedralcity.gov

CATHEDRAL CITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Cathedral City Emergency 911
Cathedral City Police 760.770.0300
Police Emergency Only 760.202.2411
Fire 760.770.8200

- Store Police Department phone number in your cell phone for non-911 emergencies, avoid tying up the 911 lines. You can also avoid having your call transferred.

Cathedral City Short-term Vacation Rental Hotline Number is accessible 24/7/365 at (760) 553-1031.