

# **PINE NEEDLER**

**A PONDEROSA COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

**SPECIAL EDITION SEPTEMBER 2009 EDITION**

## **SPECIAL MEMBERS' MEETING**

**OCTOBER 10, 2009 1 PM IN THE CLUBHOUSE**

### **WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?**

Vice-president Ann Ashford's opening sentence of the announcement states that "The purpose of the meeting is to talk about rental houses and their involvement in the Ponderosa Community Club." Well, what if you don't live near a rental, neither a short term rental nor a long term rental? I can see where both owners of rentals and members with property in the vicinity of a rental might be interested, but why should you be? This issue doesn't impact your life very much. The purpose of the special edition of the PINE NEEDLER is to convince you that your attendance is needed. All of us in Ponderosa have a special interest in our private property and a significant interest in what we own in common: the greenbelts, the roads, the water system, the pool, the clubhouse, and the river front accesses. When we have multiple rentals in the Ponderosa, it has the potential for impacting how each of us has access to the benefits of having a home or cabin in the Ponderosa. As members, it's important for all of us to come to the meeting, learn all sides of the issue, and be able to give the Board informed direction. This is an emotional issue. If the Board were able to reach a consensus, this meeting would not be held. Clearly, they haven't. In addition this meeting is more than likely the first step in the addressing of bylaws that need revising, current county zoning codes that do not apply to our situation, and making our rules and regulations effective and enforceable. The following articles are an effort to further inform and explain why your presence is worth your time.

See you there. Tim Olson, Co-editor of the PINE NEEDLER

### **PONDEROSA AT THE CROSSROADS**

Over the years, Ponderosa has faced several crises. Most recently Ponderosa faced one two years ago when our first Association Manager resigned over conflicts with members of the Board. Members and tension filled the Clubhouse. Before the meeting concluded, the Association Manager was back on the job and within weeks several members of that board had resigned. The attending community members made it clear: they did not choose to return to the stormy seas of an organization without a rudder subject to every change of wind and tide.

We are not at a crisis as an all members meeting approaches in October. We are, however, at a crossroads and several possibilities exist that could lead us to another crisis or to further stability. This meeting has a limited agenda and is intended as a forum for members to make their opinions heard regarding short term rentals in our community. In addition, the meeting may set the tone (acrimonious or civil) and the direction of the community for some years to come as it deliberates on several governing documents that will impact what becomes of Ponderosa.

More specifically, Ponderosa's Bylaws and Operations and Procedures are obsolete and were approved prior to our hiring an Association Manager; our covenants have lapsed and Chelan County's codes for the Ponderosa apply to our situation in very few respects; our Rules, Regulations and related policies have been developed as solutions to problems as they arise and are relatively unknown to most of our members, not understood very well by others, and simply ignored by

some. It's safe to say that our governing documents will be addressed over the next few years and the results will determine the quality of life for the members of Ponderosa for years after that.

Ann Ashford, our Vice-President, writes in the invitation to the meeting that "each member has a right to do whatever they choose with their own property. We, as a Board, cannot change that." To a large extent that's true, but not entirely. What I do with my property still has to be in compliance with the Rural Waterfront Codes of Chelan County. The Board can't arbitrarily change that, but the Board and the community could appeal to the Chelan County Commissioners for a rezoning that applies to our situation and the new codes could either further restrict or loosen what I do with my property. It has happened before and could happen again. If we cooperatively work at this, the community as a whole can have an impact on what owners may or not do with their property in regards to the environment, junk, businesses, noise and other issues.

Ann writes "We need input to steer us towards the real issues at hand." I'm not exactly sure what she means by the "real issues", but I'd guess she's referring to those issues over which the Board does have the authority to act in our behalf and rentals, to some extent, is one of those issues. The Board has already made a policy that our pool is a "members" only pool. The Board considered but did not act on a discussion that would have required land lords to pay a fee for using their properties as rentals. With obsolete bylaws, no covenants, and inadequate zoning codes, the question of rentals brings the Board right up against where they have authority to act and where they do not. Beyond that, the Board faces the difficulty of enforcing and administering any policy which they approve. We need to give the Board our input in both respects: the rules that apply to all of us in how we use our property and to who else and how they may use the facilities and property we hold in common. We need to tell the Board that we want zoning codes that will bring our community (private property or not) under control. Rentals may be as good a place to start as any. The question is not only what rights do renters have in a private community but do we want rentals at all? The Board says they want "direction" from us and we need to give it them.

**See you at the meeting! Saturday, October 10, 2009 1:00 pm at the Clubhouse**

## **A VISION FOR THE PONDEROSA**

All of us who have gravitated here from the coast have had the experience of muddling through the rain and wind from Gold Bar to Stevens Pass and then waited for that giddy feeling as we slide down the east side looking up for that patch of blue between the foothills that becomes a glorious blue with a brilliant yellow disk warming us through the windshield as we set the car on cruise control shortly after we pass Rayrock. Well, for me, it's what it must be like approaching heaven.

After turning left at Coles Corner, how well I remember the first time my wife and I entered Ponderosa. After an inviting drive up Camp 12 Road we turned right on Colt where a trashed trailer on the left and a derelict unfinished cabin on the right greeted us. It didn't improve much as we drove slowly down the hill: a deserted SUV filled with junk, uncared for lots with thick underbrush, caved in trailers left to deteriorate made a statement that "anything goes" in Ponderosa. Sprinkled among this mess was an occasional lovely, cared for cabin or home. We were appalled at the worst of what we humans can do to a beautiful setting. The following morning, however, standing in the morning sun behind a rotting A-frame, how could we resist the waving grasses, wild flowers, and the sun splashing over us? Looking through rose colored glasses, we saw the potential and within three months, became partners in a riverside cabin and five years later owners of our own home in Ponderosa. Four months after purchasing our own place, I became a member of the Board. That was nearly twenty years ago.

Ponderosa has changed and for the better. The trashed trailer is gone and the dilapidated cabin has been purchased and finished. In 2009, greenbelt trails and vistas above the river make walking a pleasure. A new swimming pool, a vastly improved clubhouse, and an up-to-date children's play area encourage members of all ages to enjoy the available activities. Towering firs and pines, understory vine maples and Nootka roses, landscaped gardens that feature native

plants and well maintained homes and gardens make taking an evening or morning stroll or run a delight. In addition we have vastly improved management with an excellent professional staff.

We also have a mission statement. Every time you receive a PINE NEEDLER, you can find it on the first page. **THE PONDEROSA COMMUNITY CLUB'S MISSION IS TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND WECOMING COMMUNITY WHICH ENHANCES RECREATIONAL AND RESIDENTIAL LIVING THROUGH ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP PARTICPATION, VISIONARY LEADERSHIP, AND COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY AND HARMONY WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.** It doesn't take much analysis to realize we have come a long way and we have a long way to go before making our Mission Statement a reality.

What is most lacking and most needed in the present is "**ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP PARTICPATION.**" Only that will bring the promises of the Mission Statement closer to reality. We need members with an investment in the community to become involved in revising our governing documents to assure the further enhancement of Ponderosa and discourage member practices that harm the environment and decrease the enjoyment of its members. In short, we need enforceable bylaws, rules and regulations, and zoning codes that will keep us moving in that direction.

### **DO YOU HAVE AN OWNER OR RENTER MENTALITY?**

Over the years, I've heard ways to divide up the membership of Ponderosa. For instance, we have "the locals and the coastees", the "full timers and the weekenders", and now we have a new one, "the members and the renters". We have always had renters, but mostly long term renters and owners coexisting fairly peacefully. Even then disagreement existed between owners of the rentals, the renters and other members. Sometimes it got nasty, especially regarding poorly maintained rental property and the use of the pool. Recently, however, when some members talk about renters, they talk about "transient", "weekend" or "short term" renters. The tone in the members' voices is often unfriendly and followed by a complaint: loud, late parties, illegal fires, overcrowded properties with tents and RVs, rude behavior, and speeding ORV's. These members have made familiar another category, "the landlords", those members who purchase properties and rent them out either for profit or to help make the mortgage payments. Other members are unaffected by the number of rentals and either don't know about the fuss or wonder what the problem could be?

There have been sufficient complaints that the issue has reached the Board. Although the Board has spent several hours discussing the increasing number of rentals, they have been unable to reach consensus about what policies are needed. Tension often exists between Board members about this issue. Two Board members rent out their properties and three do not. This is at the heart of the meeting on October 10. The Board is asking for member input before establishing further policies or putting the problem on a ballot before the membership for a vote.

Discussion at the Board meetings often centers on the difference between renter and owner mentality. Renters are here to "use it and leave it." Even if the landlords have posted Ponderosa rules and regulations in their rentals and on their websites, renters may or may not take them seriously. After all, in the morning they are gone and may return or not. A rebuttal to this point is that many members of the Ponderosa treat the community in the same manner, "use it and leave it." Ponderosa for them is a launching pad providing access to the many recreational activities within a short distance. They don't care much about how their property appears. It's pointed out that rental properties have to be maintained to be appealing. Hard to argue with that.

On the other hand, an increasing number of Ponderosa owners now either call this community their home or their home away from home. Concerned not only with their own property and the rights they have on it, they care about the community as a whole. They want a community they will be proud to have their friends and family visit; a safe community; a place that upon entrance creates the same feelings as coming down the pass into the sunshine.

**See you at the meeting! Saturday, October 10, 2009**

**1:00 PM at the Clubhouse**