

GVCCC Information Sheet: Local Trash Services

Background Information:

About 150 homeowners and HOA officers attended the GVCCC Trash Forum January 8 at Desert Hills Social Center to get information on refuse collection service policies of various providers in the Green Valley area.

Representatives from Saguaro Environmental Services, Talking Trash, and Waste Management, Inc. discussed their policies and answered individuals' questions. The vendors also displayed their trucks and sample containers.

The forum was held in response to homeowners reactions to letters they had received earlier from their refuse vendors informing some homeowners of service changes to one day per week trash collection from two times per week as well as increased customer fees. Customers would have to use a 35-gallon container for recyclables and select from 35-, 64-, or 96-gallon refuse containers that would allow the company to use a truck with an automated mechanical arm for one-man truck operation.

Homeowners present were very vocal in their desire to have available a single brochure that would list the costs of each company's general and special service packages, fuel surcharges, and detailed information about the trucks being used. A group of volunteers is working with the GVCCC office to develop such an information sheet.

What problems might homeowners have with using larger trash containers?

Many homeowner associations have CC&Rs (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions) that limit where trash containers can be stored. For some homeowners, the possibility of having to switch from using in-ground trash storage and small 18-gallon rectangular plastic recycle bins to at least two 35-gallon receptacles presents them with a real challenge to find more out-of-sight storage space for these or larger containers.

The proposed new larger containers will be on wheels. However, homeowners who have difficulty walking or those who use canes or walkers may have problems getting the proposed new containers to and from the street.

In addition, curb and sidewalk style and placement vary from neighborhood to neighborhood. In many areas of town, these larger containers would need to be placed on the sidewalks to be in a position in which the automated mechanical arm could reach and dump the containers. Waste receptacles sitting for hours on sidewalks could be a danger for walkers. Furthermore, on windy days, empty large trash containers could easily turn into rolling missiles.

What are some homeowners associations doing to alleviate trash collection problems?

Each homeowners association is unique. Solutions that suit one association won't meet the concerns of other HOAs.

For example, The Legends has homes only on one side of each street. For the past two years, that association has required that their homeowners purchase plastic trash containers that are placed in the street for pickup. That leaves the sidewalks clear for walkers.

Should associations be considering amending their CC&Rs?

Most often, homeowner association directors usually want to avoid amending their CC&Rs because such changes usually require a 67 to 75 percent favorable vote of the membership to change or amend the document.

However, San Ignacio Vistas, Inc. has undertaken this challenge and written a declaration amending its CC&Rs. The amended article states that each owner is solely responsible for the removal of refuse. To minimize truck traffic, the owners grant the Board the authority to enter into a Refuse Removal Service Agreement with one Refuse Removal Service Provider. The dated and signed document will be recorded with the Pima County Registrar's office.

What kind of research do HOAs need to be doing to help solve trash problems?

To find the best service provider for individual homeowners associations, directors need to know what their homeowners want. While a letter from the directors is one means of communication, an association community meeting provides direct immediate response to questions such as:

- Is there a refuse service provider willing to provide the type of services your homeowners seek? Are the services and prices comparable with those of other refuse service providers?
- Are homeowners open to paying a lower monthly rate as a trade off for one day per week trash collection?
- Will one day per week service necessitate homeowners using several 35-gallon containers or single 64- or 96-gallon receptacles?
- How many homeowners will find "back door service" to be an important consideration? (Back door service means that the service provider will take the trash and recyclable containers from the stored area, dump them, and return the containers to storage.) What is the monthly cost of this specialized service?
- Will bundled brush and tree trimmings be picked up?
- How can you get a complete list of recyclables that will be picked up?
- How soon will announced service changes be instituted in your HOA?

What more can GVCCC do to help homeowners solve their refuse problems?

Call GVCCC, 648-1936, to get up-to-date trash information or go to the Issues tab on our web site www.gvccc.org.

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