

Inputs for the BLHOA February 2020 Newsletter

Road markings at intersection of Brier Lake Dr. and Hwy 190.

Few, if any, issues have generated as much interest among residents of Brier Lake Estates than the road markings implemented last fall to add a turning lane into the new subdivision being developed on the south side of highway 190. As originally implemented, these road markings made it impossible (or at least illegal) to turn into Brier Lake Dr. from the West, or to turn out of Brier Lake Dr, to the East. The design and implementation of these markings was funded by the developer of the new subdivision, presumably as part of the approval process for the development. The plans were, however, approved by both Parish and State officials, who clearly were less than diligent in fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure that the design met all regulatory requirements.

The good news is that at least the St. Tammany Parish authorities have moved quickly to rectify the problem. A revised design was presented at a Special General Membership meeting of Brier Lake Homeowners on Jan. 9. This design divided the turning lane, with about half of it allocated to the new subdivision, and half to Brier Lake. At the meeting, many Brier Lake homeowners offered suggestions for improvements to the design, and Jay Watson agreed to submit them for consideration by the appropriate people in state and local government.

There are basically 2 constraints on the new design:

1. The cost to implement the design must be within the budget of \$100k proposed by St. Tammany Parish.
2. It must meet all Louisiana Dept. of Transportation rules and regulations

The proposal by St. Tammany to spend Parish funds on a State road is unprecedented! It was proposed because the Parish is able to do the design and award a contract for the actual work far sooner than the State would be able to do the same. There appears to be a verbal understanding that the State will reimburse the Parish at some time in the future, and via some as yet undefined financial transaction.

Our Parish Councilman, Steve Stefancik, and Parish engineer Jay Watson both attended the meeting of Brier Lakes Homeowners on February 13th to give an update on the project. The design had been changed to extend the turning lanes about 40 ft. to the West, as suggested by Brier Lake homeowners at the January meeting. This design will be submitted to Louisiana state authorities for approval before being put out for bids by St. Tammany Parish. Jay had kept the state informed as the design was developed, so approval should not be a problem. The only bad news is that it will still take some months for all of the steps necessary for full implementation of the new markings.

Need for greater involvement in Homeowners Association activities by Brier Lake homeowners.

There is an old saying that every cloud has a silver lining. This even appears to be true of the road problem described above. The three Homeowners Association (HOA) meetings at which the road issue was discussed were by far the best attended of any recent meetings!

At any given time, there are numerous issues that affect the quality of life and property values for Brier Lake residents. The primary responsibility for resolving these issues rests with the Homeowners Association, and the 9 members of the Board. Each Board member serves a term of 3 years, with 3 members elected every year at the Annual General Meeting in February. Ideally, Brier Lake residents would take it in turns to serve on the Board, but in recent years it has become difficult to get enough volunteers to run for office. This has resulted in some people staying on the Board for longer than they would wish, and at times, some positions left vacant. A recent change to the Association By-Laws made provision for as few as 7 board members, but by far the best situation is a full complement of 9 members.

All residents are asked to consider running for one of the open positions on the Board at the elections on March 12th. If you are willing to serve, you will be given the opportunity to address the membership at the meeting, summarize your background and areas of interest, and express your opinion on any current issues. Please note, however, that such an address is optional, and certainly not required, for prospective Board members. Alternatively, offer to assist the board on one of several standing committees, such as drainage, road maintenance or environmental control. The more people who are involved in the Brier Lake community, the better life will be for all of us.