



**Board of Directors General Business Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 6:00pm**

Meeting held in-person at the Caughlin Ranch HOA conference room & virtually via GoToMeeting

Board Members in attendance in-person or via teleconference and/or telephone:

Michael Ginsburg, Vice President	Allen Black, Treasurer	Al Dennis, Director
Jon Ericson, Secretary	Harvey Miller, Director	Steve Bremer, Director

Board Members absent

Thomas Keiffer, President

Others in attendance in-person or via teleconference and/or telephone:

Lisa Nunley, General Manager Sandy Wheeler, Asst. Manager/CAM Randy Lisenby, Landscape Supt.
Guest: James Claiborne with Vote-Now.com

34 Homeowners in-person; 2 attending virtually

1. **Call to order and establish quorum:** Vice President (VP) Ginsburg called the meeting to order at 6:10p.m. A quorum was established with six (6) Board Members present either in person, via teleconference and/or telephone.
2. **Member Comments.** VP Ginsburg welcomed everyone present and provided a brief overview of guidelines regarding Member Comments to the Homeowners present. This item permits homeowners to give comments regarding items on the agenda. However, an exception was made to allow those in attendance to speak on any topic.
 - A homeowner thanked GM Nunley for inviting them to tonight's meeting. He also relayed thanks for the removal of the large juniper bushes in the common area behind their homes last year. His home backs up to Village Green Park and he expressed concern about the Association's plans to plant trees in that area. He believes his insurance company will cancel their coverage if trees are planted there.
 - A homeowner commented about the need for defensible space and requested the Association not plant trees in the common area behind her home.
 - A homeowner expressed opposition to planting trees and stated this goes against defensible space efforts.
 - A homeowner provided information about fires in Southern California and encouraged additional defensible space efforts and reduction in trees.
 - A homeowner agreed that fire is an enormous concern. However, HOA is actively doing a lot of work with sheep as well as the crews doing defensible space work. Homeowners also need to do work to reduce vegetation around their homes.
 - A homeowner relayed that she moved here because of all the trees and how beautiful it is. Her concern is the target practice that goes on near BLM/U.S. Forest Service. She can never get anyone to respond to her calls and wonders if the HOA can intervene.
 - A homeowner conveyed frustration with the number of emails from the HOA. He doesn't need multiple emails about events and wants to know if events and other informational emails can be separated.
 - A homeowner agreed with the other comments regarding trees and target shooting. Also, the addition of trees will block her view.
 - A homeowner moved here 10 years ago because of the community's beauty but is concerned with fire and the overgrowth on the trails system, specifically the greenbelt area. She see where tree limbs have been trimmed but not picked up. She appreciates the sheep but does not think that is enough.
 - A homeowner expressed concern about defensible space near home and encouraged homeowners to request permission to remove their trees.

- A homeowner inquired about how to mitigate fire potential in other owners' lots outside of Caughlin Ranch HOA behind his home. He was directed to the Assessor's website for homeowner information.
- A homeowner stated they thought they purchased a home away from the urban wildland interface but have been evacuated twice. She stated the issue is not just common area greenery, but the Association's architectural standards are outdated and a concern.

Item 6.2 was taken out of order and moved up on the Agenda to accommodate guest, James Claiborne with Vote-Now.com.

**6.2 Review and Possibly Approve Elimination of Physical Mailers (except those required by statute)
- Guest Attendee James Claiborne with Vote-Now.com**

Recap: Currently, statute allows for electronic mailing of most notices for those unit owners who have provided email addresses to the association, except for those who have opted out. Statute governing these requirements is located in NRS 116.31034 (ballots/elections), NRS 116.31068 (required notices). Most notices may be sent electronically except those outlined in NRS 116.3116-31168 inclusive.

CRHA currently sends the Annual Mailer (with assessment and election information) and any revised governing documents via USPS to ensure that all members of the Association receive the information. At the March and May meetings the Board was provided with cost information from Vote-Now.com Election Services for an annual mailer with election/ballot processing services via electronic means as well as hard-copy mailing. The breakdown for estimate purposes was 50/50 (email/hard-copy). After review and discussion, the Board voted to postpone the item to the July meeting to allow time for email authorization forms to be returned after the Rancher publication.

GM Nunley reported that, as of July 16th, 128 forms have been received for a total of 1,149 email authorizations on record. This total is a reduction from the last meeting as we have received a number of "opt outs" since that date. This number does not significantly change the information from the previous meeting. Another solicitation for email authorization forms will be sent via email blast in the next 30 days.

The Board was provided with an Agreement from Vote-Now.com for their consideration.

James Claiborne with Vote-Now.com was in attendance virtually and engaged with the Board in questions and answers regarding mailings vs electronic notices, timelines, costs, voting processes, etc.

Vote-Now.com would facilitate both the electronic notifications as well as those being sent via USPS. They have a follow-up notification process for electronic ballots, reminding homeowners to vote.

Motion: Director Dennis moved to select Vote-Now.com for electronic voting services for this year's Annual Elections and approve the Agreement for services in the amount of \$18,865.00; Director Miller seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

The Board thanked Mr. Claiborne for attending; GM Nunley will send the signed agreement this week.

The meeting returned to its regularly scheduled agenda.

- 3. Consent Agenda.** The proposed Consent Agenda below is presented for the Board's acceptance or revision. VP Ginsburg confirmed that all Board Members have reviewed and become familiar with the Consent Agenda items prior to proceeding.

Motion: Secretary Ericson moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda except for Item c.2) Landscaping & Maintenance Report, which I request be moved out of the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Meeting Agenda for discussion and possible action. Director Dennis seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

- a. Minutes:** Review & approve May 28, 2025, Board of Directors General Business Meeting Minutes
The May 28, 2025, Board of Directors General Meeting Minutes were provided to the Board for review and consideration.

b. *Finances:*

Review & approve Bad Debt write-offs. There are no Bad Debt Write-offs at this time.

c. *Reports & Updates:*

- 1) *Finance & Budget Committee.* The Board was provided with a recap from Martin Kwitek of the most recent F&B Meeting (Reserve Study Review).
- 2) *Landscaping & Maintenance Dept., including update on Village Green Park Playground Repairs* (Superintendent Lisenby) – moved out of consent agenda.
- 3) *Architectural Control Committee.* Ninety-six (96) applications were reviewed from 05/01/2025 through 06/30/2025. Of those, ninety-two (92) were approved with the standard conditions, one (1) was withdrawn, and three (3) were denied. The ACC meets twice per month on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, except for November and December when they meet once per month. (A copy of the detailed list of submittals was provided to the Board in their Executive Session packet.)
- 4) *Community Events.* The Events/Caughlin Rancher Committee met on July 9th to review potential topics and articles for the Sept/Oct 2025 edition of The Caughlin Rancher. Discussion also included planning for events such as the July Concerts on the Green, Annual CRHA Residents BBQ, Cross Peak Hike (now that TMPA is dissolved), Oktoberfest and the Annual Meeting. A copy of the Board approved 2025 Events Schedule was provided to the Board for their information.
- 5) *Branding / Signage Ad Hoc Committee.* The new logo is gradually being incorporated into CRHA. Office stationery, the For Rent/For Sale signage, banners, Landscape/Maintenance uniforms, CRHA vehicles have been updated. In 2024 the HOA office building signage, Caughlin Creek (both entries) and Seasons were completed. Caughlin Crest, Vantage Pointe and Village Green Park signs were repaired and repainted in March 2025 by CRHA Maint. Crews. The upper Caughlin entry monument signage was completed in June 2025. A updated listing was provided for the Board's information.
- 6) *Community Information, including Caughlin Pkwy Speeding and Remediation Efforts.* In addition to the items on this agenda, below are some other highlighted items and projects being addressed by management and staff since the last meeting (the list is not all-inclusive):
 - New Homeowner Orientation is held virtually on the 2nd Thursday of each month.
 - GM Nunley is a member of CAI's Education Committee and CAI's Legislative Action Committee for Nevada and attends monthly meetings for each committee.
 - Staff continues to support the Events program and looks forward to helping organize and facilitate the ongoing and upcoming Summer events.
 - Vista Pointe HOA irrigation agreement was fully executed following the March board meeting. Landscape crews have inspected and repaired the irrigation system, and two meters have been installed and usage is being monitored. CRHA will issue an invoice for irrigation use during the next quarter. An update has not been received from VPHOA regarding their efforts to obtain membership approval for the BLA.
 - The agreement with Tray Palmer was fully executed and Mr. Palmer is in the process of creating the CWPP and Evacuation plans. Update: GM Nunley met with Mr. Palmer on May 22nd and learned that the City of Reno received a grant to develop a CWPP for the City of Reno, including specific areas such as Caughlin Ranch. To avoid duplicating efforts, and to save CRHA the cost for him to develop a CWPP, he recommends waiting to see what the City's plan entails. The timeline is pushed out to the Fall, but he also said that mitigation efforts are not likely to be undertaken until after that time. Evacuation Plan is presented at today's meeting.
 - In June, a group of homeowners bordering Village Green Park (on Sommerville) disrupted the landscape maintenance crews' attempts to plant trees in the open space where juniper bushes were removed last year (at the request of the same homeowners). The trees were going to be planted no less than 15 feet off the fence line (which is within parameters set by the National Fire Protection

Association (NFPA). Much communication has taken place with the homeowners who are planning to attend the July 23rd meeting to voice their concerns. Supt. Lisenby and GM Nunley met onsite with Tray Palmer, fire prevention consultant, to obtain his opinion on whether the tree planting plan is acceptable. His response was provided to the Board in their meeting packet. The NFPA Defensible Space Guide is located on the Board Tablets for additional information.

- The Annual Registration with the Real Estate Division has been completed and payment made.
- The Annual Secretary of State filing has been completed.
- Additional No Motorized Vehicles signage was ordered and is ready for install at VGP.
- The tree trimming by Arbor Pros behind Cedar Creek Court was completed the first week of July.
- **Caughlin Parkway Speeding Mitigation Update** (from Harvey Miller 07.15.2025). In working with Reno PD, they have conducted several operations in the Caughlin Ranch area. During those efforts they issued 4 warnings, 8 citations, had one car towed and one arrest for reckless driving. Their enforcement program will continue with future programs attempting to help curtail speeding drivers. Unfortunately, we are challenged with speeders and now "e-bikers" disrupting our community, which is compounding our work. Harvey

Item(s) Removed from Consent Agenda, for Review and Possible Action

Landscaping & Maintenance Dept., including update on Village Green Park Playground Repairs (Superintendent Lisenby)

Miscellaneous Projects / Weekly Maintenance:

- Normal weekly maintenance on-going
- Defensible Space maintenance on-going
- Steamboat ditch started on May 13th
- Irrigation pumps turned on May 19th
- First fertilizing of turf complete
- Crews are working despite warm temperatures; Supervisors are monitoring for safety
- Second fertilizing of turf is complete
- Summer flowers are planted
- Graffiti removal throughout the Ranch is on-going
- All 3 Parks are inspected and cleaned daily
- Coordinating repairs to VGP playground "globe" that was likely vandalized. Manufacturer confirmed repair is a warranty item. Will be providing a Spinmax as temporary replacement. Will redesign and manufacture a new orbiter. Timeline is approximately two months.
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Projects:

- Building a small rock wall behind Caughlin Club to control erosion along path; anticipate completion by end of July
- Phase 2 of erosion project in Traditions/Planting new trees & installing new drip system completed
- Fence repair work along Caughlin Parkway will start soon.

Supt. Lisenby confirmed that CRHA is responsible for cleanup of the Steamboat Ditch once their team has removed plant debris from the ditch.

4. Finances:

4.1 Review & accept (un-audited) Financial Reports dated April 30, 2025 & May 31, 2025

The following report was provided to the Board of Directors which includes bank balances for the operating and reserve accounts:

- 2025 CD Schedule enclosed.

- Treasurer Black has been provided with a copy of all the bank/investment statements and associated reconciliations along with the supporting financial reports.
- The Board Members have been provided copies of the GL Balance Sheet by Fund and the Statement of Revenues and Expenses as of April 30, 2025, and May 31, 2025.
- Bank statements are being reconciled and financial reports reviewed and adjusted monthly by the GL Accountant and Assistant Manager Wheeler to ensure CRHA is reporting on a true accrual basis.
- The Association's cash position through May 31st: BALANCE SHEET
Operating cash = \$1,143,254.93.
Reserve cash and Investments/CD's Total: \$1,106,656.07.
CRHA = \$536,854.98
Whispering Canyon = \$176,399.49
Caughlin Creek/Deer Creek = \$138,361.20
Mountainshyre = \$255,040.40
- Through May 31, 2025, on an accrual basis, REVENUE and EXPENSES REPORT
- Total (Operating) Income was \$1,294,749.50; over YTD Budget by \$15,285.50
- Currently, all reserve transfers are being deposited on a quarterly basis due to the positive cash flow.
- Total (Operating) Expense was \$1,109,412.30; under YTD Budget by \$34,258.70.
- Expense recap: Operating = \$269,949.52 over budget by \$21,494.52;
Payroll = \$615,826.83 under budget by \$51,329.17;
R&M = \$151,645.96 under budget by \$10,884.04;
Utilities = \$71,989.99 over budget by \$6,459.99.
- Total Reserve Income was \$243,963.52; over budget by \$8,763.52.
- Total Reserve Expense was \$80,782.37 under YTD Budget by \$60,985.63; 2025 Reserve Expense Budget = \$695,540.

The Board is required to review the Association's financial information in accordance with NRS 116.31083. The Association is following paragraph (b) of subsection 2 of NRS 116.3115 and confirms that reserve funds have not been used for daily maintenance.

Motion: Director Bremer moved to accept the Association's unaudited financial reports dated April 30, 2025, and May 31, 2025, as presented. Director Miller seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

5. Reports & Updates:

5.1 Executive Session Summary and Pending Legal Action against the Association

(Per NRS 116.31085 subsection 6)

Pursuant to NRS 116.31085 subsection 6, the following items are being reported as reviewed during the last Executive Session Meeting held on July 23, 2025:

- Approval of the May 28, 2025, Executive meeting minutes.
- Pending legal action notices as follows:
 - Discussion of the status of a homeowner complaint/dispute involving CRHA and Washoe County regarding potential easement deed associated with recent spur road abandonment.
 - Discussion of civil complaint for outstanding fines.
- Review the Violation Report & fines.
- Review the most recent Architectural Control Committee Report.
- Review Homeowner disputes, appeals and alleged violations (one in-person; one written appeal)
- Review the Accounts Receivable Aging Report.
- Review of bad debt write-offs (if any)
- Discussion of Personnel items.

6. Unfinished Business:

6.1 Update on Status of Disengaging from Caughlin Crossing Commercial Center (CCCC)

The CCCC Board has not met since April 16th. At that meeting, GM Nunley attended (in a non-voting capacity). A lengthy discussion took place regarding CRHA's request to be removed as a member of the Association. Their legal counsel had not yet reviewed the request. While they were prepared to vote, GM Nunley suggested they may want to wait until their legal counsel could review and provide an opinion. Also, their PM committed to providing everyone with information on how assessments would be impacted. An email with the assessment and other information was sent to all members of the Association with a request for feedback. CCCC will meet again on July 30th.

**6.2 Review and Possibly Approve Elimination of Physical Mailers (except those required by statute)
- Guest Attendee James Claiborne with Vote-Now.com** This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

6.3 Review & Possibly Approve Proposal from IMC for Rubber Nugget Mulch to Refresh Village Green Park Playground

At the May Board Meeting, the Board requested additional information and research to better understand this item. GM Nunley provided the following information.

For the Proposal from IMC to refresh the existing rubber mulch nuggets, additional information regarding the nuggets was provided in the Board's packet.

Additional website research of rubber mulch for 1,650 cf of nuggets resulted in the following:

- Home Depot \$15,525.62 (excluding tax; no delivery fee if picked up)
- RubberMulch.com \$16,478.00 (excluding tax and shipping)
- MulchDirect.com \$18,898.00 (excluding tax and shipping)
- Rainbow Mulch \$95,584.12 (includes tax and shipping)

The Board was provided with screen shots of the above.

The Playground Safety Guide published by the U.S. Consumer Product Commission was included on the Board tablets. The guide establishes safety requirements for playgrounds designed for public use.

An onsite inspection by GM Nunley and Landscape Supt. Lisenby revealed a significant reduction in nuggets. Photos of the current condition of the playground was also provided to the Board. It was strongly recommended that the nuggets be refreshed to increase safety measures on the playground.

Motion: Treasurer Black moved to approve the proposal from IMC Outdoor Living in the amount of \$11,490.00 for rubber mulch nuggets to refresh the Village Green Park Playground area. Secretary Ericson seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

6.4 Review & Possibly Approve OSHA Employee Heat Illness Prevention Plan

The Board was provided with the final draft of the Employee Heat Illness Prevention Plan as required by OSHA. The draft has been reviewed by the Association's HR attorney, Bonnie Drinkwater. She had a few comments and recommended changes which have been incorporated into the plan. The only significant cost impact would be the possible purchase of waterjugs for the trucks. Supt. Lisenby is already following the steps outlined in the plan.

Motion: Treasurer Black moved to approve the OSHA Employee Heat Illness Prevention Plan as presented. Director Bremer seconded. Motion unanimously carried.

7. New Business:

7.1 Review, Discussion and Possible Decision regarding Annual Plantings at Neighborhood & Monument Entrances

Per a request by Director Miller, information regarding the cost to plant annual flowers at the entrances to the community and 20+ neighborhoods, as well as at Village Green Park (flowers plus labor) was provided to the Board. An estimated cost to convert these areas to instead accommodate perennial shrubs (irrigation retrofit, labor, materials/plants) was also provided.

Annual Flowers: Total Annual Cost: \$14,724.24

Perennial Shrubs: Approximate Cost to Convert: \$44,665.80

Discussion ensued regarding crew's time for planting flowers vs. annual cost to maintain shrubs and increased workload for planter-bed crew (could be several extra weeks of work per year). Per Supt. Lisenby, once the flowerbeds are planted there is little maintenance required. A comment was made about line-of-sight concerns with shrubs. Further discussion continued. Two homeowners were permitted to make a comment, and both were in favor of keeping the annual flowers.

Motion: Treasurer Black moved to postpone this item to give Supt. Lisenby time to research other ground covers. No second. Motion dies for lack of a second.

Director Bremer moved to take no further action on this item. Director Miller seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

7.2 Review and Possibly Approve Wildfire Evacuation Plan

The Community Evacuation Plan, developed by Tray Palmer, Fire Safety Consulting Services, was provided to the Board for their review and consideration. Once approved, an email blast will be sent directing homeowners to access the plan on the website. A note will also be made in the next Caughlin Rancher regarding same.

Motion: Director Bremer moved to approve the Community Evacuation Plan as presented by Tray Palmer, Fire Safety Consultant. Director Black seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.

8. Member Comments: This time is devoted to Association Members who have comments and/or concerns regarding any association matters. The Board has the authority to limit the time for individual comments. A time limit of two (2) minutes per member has been allotted. No member can give away his or her allotted time to expand another member's time. In consideration of other members who may wish to present comments and/or concerns, please avoid repetition.

- A homeowner provided written comments regarding common area in Village Green Park adjacent to his home and his disagreement with landscaping plans for that area.
- A homeowner provided written comments regarding common area in Village Green Park adjacent to her home and her disagreement with landscaping plans for that area.
- A homeowner relayed her thanks for the signage update for her neighborhood – it's beautiful.
- Director Miller relayed thanks to Lisa Ericson for obtaining additional sponsorships for this year's concerts, which helped to reduce the overall costs.

9. Announce Future Meeting Dates & Recess/Adjourn *:

- **Thursday, Aug 21, 2025** - 2026 Budget Review Workshop with Finance & Budget Comm 4:00pm
- **Monday, Sept 29, 2025** - Board Agenda Workshop 4:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Oct 1, 2025** - Board Executive Session 5:00 p.m.
- Board General Business Meeting 6:00 p.m.

Motion: Director Black moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30p.m.; Secretary Ericson seconded. Motion unanimously carried.



Jon Ericson, Secretary Board of Directors
Caughlin Ranch Homeowners Association

July 6, 2025

To: Caughlin HOA and Board Members

From: Gerry Roberts, 4615 Sommerville Way

Subject: Fire Hazard on South East Slope on Village Green Park



On June 19th 2025, I noticed that two HOA workmen were beginning to dig holes with a backhoe ten feet from our back fences. Our neighbor asked them to stop and they did. There was no supervisor at the site to discuss this with. I noticed there was a trailer with 20 foot trees that were going to be planted on the slope.

I contacted the HOA and was informed the tree planting had been put on hold.

The HOA suggested that I attend the July 23rd board meeting to discuss my concerns regarding the trees and fire hazard they would create.

Lisa Nunley, the general manager, later informed me after the junipers were removed there had always been a plan to replant the area with trees and install some rock in certain areas to help with drainage off of the slope. Also, Lisa informed me that the HOA is working with their Fire Prevention Consultant to insure that the trees are the proper distance from the fence line.

However, in 2016 Randy Lisenby spoke with a neighbor. He stood in the homeowner's backyard overlooking the slope and brought up the fact that he knew the junipers had to be removed, since they were such a fire hazard, and the HOA already had a plan to replace them with shrubs (not trees) like they had done around Village Green Parkway.

However, it was not until the fall of 2024 that the junipers were actually removed.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SLOPE

In the 1990's, the slope was originally planted with wild flowers and were significantly watered and the slope was green with lush flowers and was very attractive.

In 2010, the flowers were removed and small junipers (2 feet x 2 feet) were planted. During the next ten years, the junipers had grown to very large sizes, many of which were 25 feet wide and 8 feet tall. Many of the junipers had grown next to and were touching our back fences. The junipers had become a very serious fire hazard.

Finally, in the fall of 2024, after many emails and conversations between the homeowners and the HOA, the junipers were removed and we were extremely grateful for the fire exposure relief.

During this period of time, the homeowners were hearing that the slope was going to be planted with trees. Various emails were written in the fall and in January 2025 explaining our concerns about the new fire hazard. A response was never received from the HOA.

Also, the homeowners were never given notice trees were going to be planted on June 19, 2025. Hence, there was a lack of communication on the HOA's part as we, as neighbors, should have been notified especially since the workman were planting the trees so close to our fences.

PROBLEMS CREATED BY TREES

1. The large trees create a new fire hazard that previously existed with the juniper that were planted on the slope.
2. The trees could cause insurance policy issues such as policy cancellations or increased premiums for our homeowner's fire insurance.
3. The trees do not address the soil erosion problems. There are certainly better options such as small plants, small shrubs, or ground cover.
4. The trees planted by the HOA could create a liability issue for the Caughlin Ranch HOA if a fire did spread to our houses on Sommerville Way and neighboring streets.

DEFENSABLE SPACE FOR FIRE PREVENTION

As for planting trees on the slope, according to the Fire Department Defensible Space Restrictions:

- 1. There should be a total clearance of plants for 30 feet behind fences on a slope.**
- 2. Trees on a slope must be planted 30-45 feet from fences depending on the anticipated spread of growth of the trees when they are mature.**
- 3. Trees must be planted 30 feet apart on slopes and trimmed 6 feet off the ground.**

Considering the distance of the slope from the fences to the path below, planting more trees in this area is not a good option.

According to one of our neighbors, John Beck, the Reno Fire Marshall, told the neighbor that insurance companies do not want to insure properties with significant fire hazards like trees and dry brush within 30 feet of a fence on a upward slope.

SUMMARY

The park does look beautiful and is a wonderful asset to our Caughlin lifestyle. We are very grateful to live in such a wonderful development.

The management of the Caughlin Ranch HOA over the years has been excellent and very responsive.

However, with the change of climate and the significant growth of all of the pine trees in the park and the high winds, there is a strong possibility of a potential fire disaster.

We are asking the HOA to avoid planting anymore trees on the slope and plant small fire retardant shrubs, flowers, and ground cover instead.

**Thank you,
Gerry Roberts
4615 Sommerville Way
(775) 771-6013**

July 2025

To The Caughlin Ranch Board Members,

We would like for the Association to follow the defensible space guidelines, referenced in government fire prevention documents, to allow us to protect our homes at the top of the slope due to the ever-increasing fire danger in our area. The slope behind our homes is moderate to steep (as defined in the guidelines) and requires additional spacing of trees and shrubs beyond that of flat terrain. As insurance companies deny and increase homeowner insurance premiums due to a lack of defensible space, this is a growing concern. The attached document provides defensible space guidelines, the extreme juniper fire hazard, and the history of the slope.

The Village Green Park is a beautiful asset to Caughlin Ranch and we are very grateful to live in such a community. However, with the change of climate, increasing tree growth and density, ever present winds, and a history of several significant, damaging fires directly affecting our neighborhood in recent years, we ask that you do not plant any more trees on the slope. This would once again create a greater fire hazard that was just remedied by removing the junipers. As suggested by the Reno Fire Department, shrubs and groundcover planted with defensible space guidelines considered would be an excellent option for landscaping the slope.

Sincerely,

Sommerville Way Homeowners

Received from
Shannon McCool
on July 7, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'S' or 'L' followed by a horizontal line.

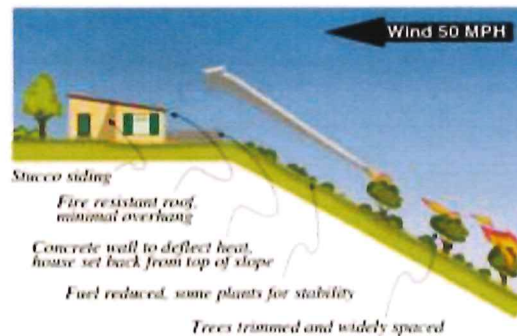
Village Green Park Slope Landscaping

Defensible Space Guidelines for a Slope:

The following are from FEMA, the US Forest Service, University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, and CalFire.

1. Trees should be placed at the bottom of the slope with shrubs and groundcover sparsely planted up hill. The persistent strong winds in our area and increased fire activity make this even more important. The US Forest Service states "the combined effect of wind and slope can be dramatic" and there is "a dramatic acceleration in spread rate...and size of the fire" on slopes.

Fighting Fire on a Slope: Special Considerations



Landscaping and structure designed for fire safety Illustration: EBMUD

Strategies for homes on hillsides

Fire tends to travel fastest uphill by preheating dried vegetation from below and making it easier to ignite. The steeper the slope, the faster a fire will spread. Narrow canyons and saddles act as chimneys that trap heat, channel wind, and create erratic fire behavior. Ridges are also fire-prone. Heavily vegetated slopes are particularly hazardous. If you live on

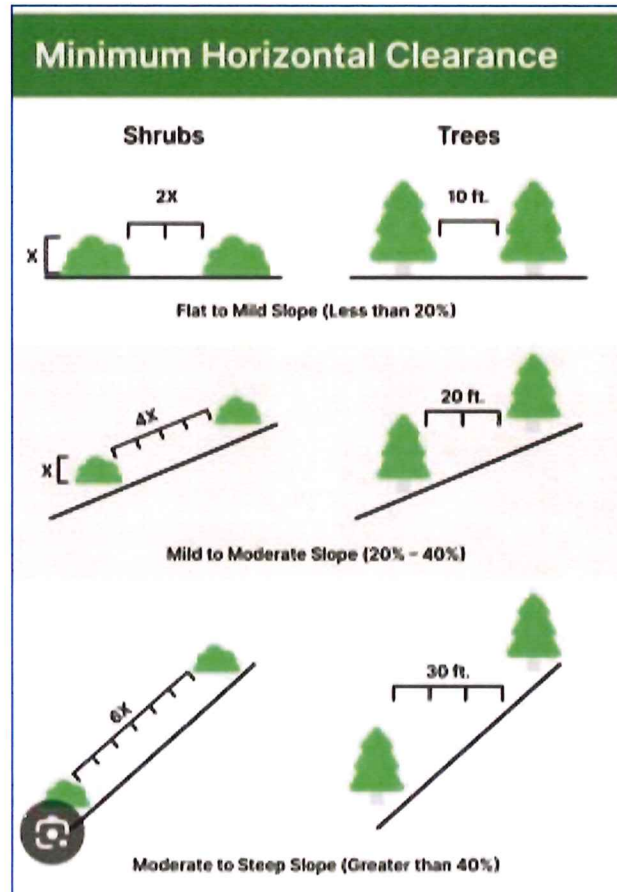
2. Vegetation on slopes should be low growing shrubs and groundcover as they are better than trees at preventing erosion and the spread of fire.

Vegetation on slopes should be low in both height and volume, but it should not be completely eliminated because bare slopes may be subject to erosion and instability. Remove dead trees and shrubs, leaving the roots in place, if practical. Work with your local fire agency to help eradicate **invasive plants**, which increase the threat of fire and cause other environmental problems.

On slopes, plant widely-spaced, deep-rooted shrubs to help control erosion. Intersperse these plants with mulch or low-growing groundcovers. Learn more about **gardening on a hillside** and **choose plants that help control erosion**.

- **Provide vertical and horizontal space between shrubs and trees**, especially on **slopes**, to avoid fire ladders (taller plants catching fire from nearby lower plants). The steeper the slope, the more widely plants should be spaced.
- **Leave space between plant groupings** with non-combustible surface areas like stone, gravel paths and other non-combustible, permeable materials to slow down the path of a fire and to allow easy access for maintenance.
- **Avoid planting trees and shrubs in rows or hedges** that provide an uninterrupted path for fire.
- **Trim tall trees to remove limbs 6 ft to 10 ft from the ground**, or up to one-third of their height

3. Guidelines state 20 – 30 ft of spacing should be allowed between the crowns (not trunks) of mature trees. Therefore, trees would need to be spaced 50 – 60 ft apart (or more) which would not allow for the planting of any more trees on the slope below the homes. Shrubs should also be widely spaced.



4. Defensible space should be more than 30 feet when there is a slope.

Incorporate the following defensible space principles:

- Create a minimum 30' defensible space area around structures (larger if there is a slope).
- Remove dead vegetation.
- Create "islands" of plants with space between.
- Create separation between layers of vegetation eliminating the "ladder" of fuels.
- Keep it green & low growing – "lean, clean, and green."

Junipers:

The Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, Nevada Division of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Reno Fire Department, City of Reno, Washoe County and referenced by the Nevada State Legislature, have all mentioned the extreme fire danger of junipers and have held "Junk the Juniper" events for at least the last 15 years to remove these dangerous plants.

Concerns with junipers:



reno gazette journal

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- Ornamental junipers often accumulate dead leaves and branchlets within their crowns. Pull back the branches of a mature juniper and see for yourself. These little "jackpots" of fuel are easily ignited by windblown embers produced by a wildfire. Thick layers of dead plant debris also build up underneath the shrubs. Juniper branches are so thick they hide this flammable material and it accumulates unnoticed. In addition, the dense foliage can be irritating to the skin, making cleanup a very unpleasant chore.

Once the junipers are removed, what should you replace them with?

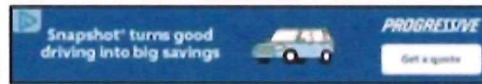
- Herbaceous plants, such as lawn, annual and perennial flowers and bulbs, that are kept green during fire season via irrigation.
- Deciduous shrubs, preferably less than two feet in height and under irrigation.
- Noncombustible landscape materials, such as gravel, rock and pavers.

•Like most coniferous plants, junipers contain volatile oils. These chemicals can cause a juniper to burn intensely.

In the Caughlin Fire After Action Analysis, junipers located next to structures were identified as one of the contributing factors to the loss and damage of homes. During Carson City's Waterfall Fire, firefighters observed ornamental junipers igniting hours after the fire front had passed through the neighborhood. Embers produced by the fire had become lodged inside junipers, went unnoticed while smoldering and eventually ignited.

In 2006, the University of Florida tested the combustibility of 34 popular ornamental shrub species. Test results showed that Chinese juniper was one of the most flammable plants tested

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LIFE

Master Gardener: Junk the junipers

Ed Smith

May 6, 2015 Updated May 15, 2015, 3:25 p.m. PT



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May is Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month and this year's theme is "Improve Your Odds – Prepare for Wildfire." During this month, activities



NEWS4 ON YOUR SIDE

Residents encouraged to 'Junk the Junipers' to prepare for wildfires

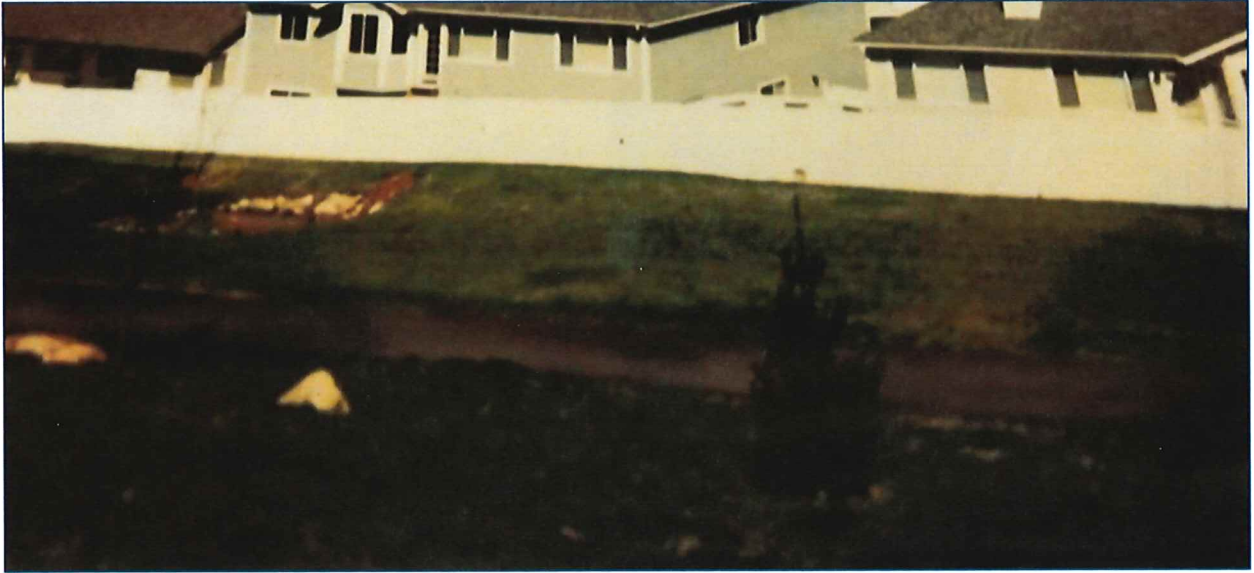
by Juan Carlos Flores

Sat, May 21, 2016 at 10:58 AM

Updated Sat, May 21, 2016 at 10:58 AM

History of the slope:

- When the homes were built in the 90's, the slope was originally planted with wildflowers and grass and was well maintained. Trees were only to be planted at the bottom of the slope near the path, not up the slope.



- Around 2005, the grass was removed from the park. No shrubs were planted.
- Around 2010, the wildflowers were removed from the slope and junipers were planted in their place.
- In 2016, Randy Lisenby spoke with a homeowner regarding a separate issue. He stood in the homeowner's backyard overlooking the slope and brought up the fact that he knew the junipers had to be removed, since they were such a fire hazard, and that they already had a plan to replace them with shrubs (no trees) like they had done around Village Green Pkwy.

Before and After of a portion of the Village Green Pkwy grass removal and subsequent shrub placement:



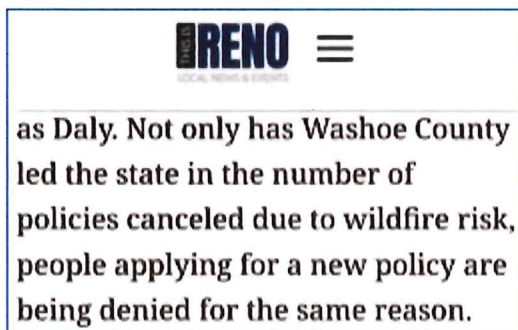
- In 2017, the Association was contacted again by phone and via email addressing the same concerns of the juniper removal and subsequent landscaping of the slope with shrubs. No response was provided.

- By 2020, the junipers had grown enormously and were abutting the homeowner's fences.



- With the previous Hawken and Caughlin Fires, a homeowner once again reached out via phone and email in October of 2020 regarding their concern about the fire hazard of the junipers and the Association saying they would remove them. This happened to be a few weeks before the Pinehaven Fire burned homes in Caughlin Ranch. At this time, the Association said they would trim the junipers. The homeowners had stated once again they would like to see the slope planted with shrubs, but no trees as they would create a greater fire hazard up a slope.

- In 2021, the junipers were only trimmed 10 feet away from the fences, but not reduced in size until they could remove them. Many of these junipers were 25 feet wide.
- In 2024, the homeowners got together to send emails to the Association to address our concerns about defensible space and once again, that the junipers should be removed due to their extreme fire danger. The Association did take prompt action and we were *extremely grateful* for this. We again suggested (as the Fire Marshall had mentioned) that the slope be planted with shrubs and groundcover to provide stability to the slope and make this end of the park just as beautiful as other areas of Caughlin Ranch. The Fire Marshall had stated that trees should be located at the bottom of the slope by the path, which is where they currently exist. This is of extra importance to us as insurance companies are denying coverage and raising rates if defensible space is not provided.



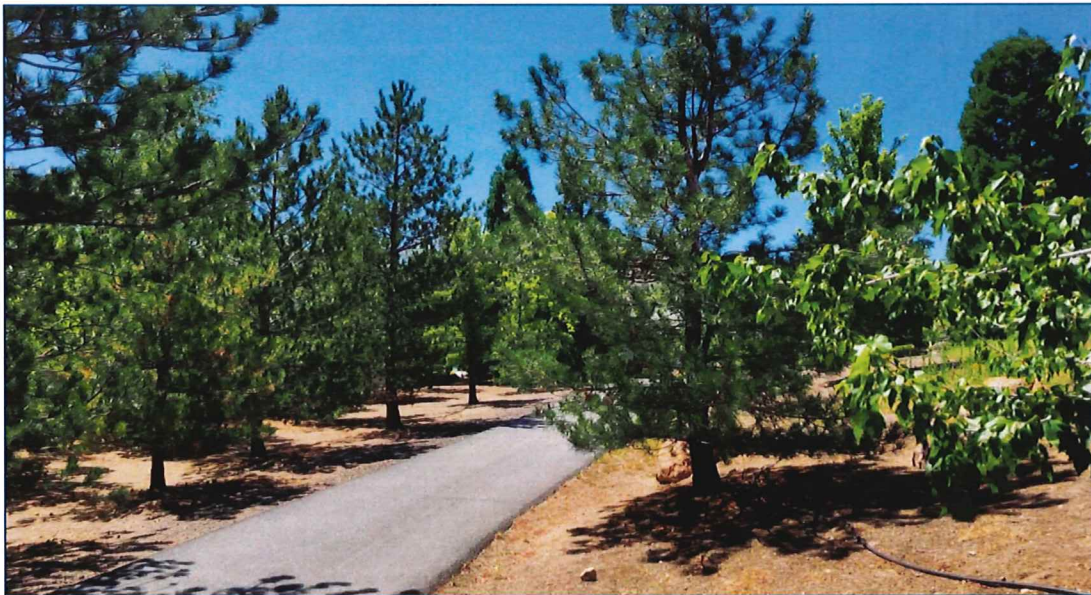
- In 2025, the homeowners once again made phone calls and sent emails regarding their concern of being able to have defensible space, especially since slopes have a higher fire risk of quickly spreading flames uphill to the homes as opposed to homes on level terrain.

Steepness of slope (as seen during juniper removal:



- The homeowners have requested to be informed regarding the future of the landscaping of the slope over the last ten years since it directly impacts our homes. We have not been included in or informed of any plans. There was a breakdown in communication and without notice on June 19, 2025, the Association attempted to plant numerous large trees, in close proximity to each other in a row, immediately behind our homes at the very top of the slope. This categorically goes against all defensible space guidelines. The Association agreed to stop this and suggested we talk to the Board regarding this concern. We have been informed that new trees on the slope could be a liability to the Association if they contribute to the destruction or damage to homes in a fire.

Since there are already a significant number of trees at the bottom of the slope (pictured below), no additional trees should be added in order to follow the defensible space guidelines.



The Association agreed that the junipers were a fire hazard and needed to be removed. There is no need to introduce a new and greater fire hazard of trees on the slope.

Thank you for your time and for addressing our concerns.