

Meet the Press: McMillen and Testa

With warmer weather just around the corner, the Home Owners Association and our community manager, David Testa were under the gun to get two major projects completed: the planned resurfacing of the sports court and the unexpected repairs to the pool. Testa and Board President Judy McMillen heaped compliments on Solera's Board for working expeditiously to analyze both projects, pour over multiple contractor bids and complete the work ahead of schedule.



David Testa, Community Manager

Judy McMillen, BoD President

In a recent interview, the two charged with leadership roles in Solera, discussed a wide range of issues affecting the community's residents.

The pair also addressed the sudden, unexpected failure of the community pool's filtration system. The previous pool maintenance company failed to report issues indicating component failures were imminent. Solera homeowner, Jim Poprock reportedly found leaks in the pump room, indicating critical repairs were required and prompted an immediate search for a new pool service company.

"We came together and got four quotes" in four days, Testa said of the board's quick action. McMillen added, the board analyzed the bids, length of time to complete the work, ordered the parts and scheduled the repairs. Because the pool repairs required quick board action, emergency sessions were closed to Solera's homeowners, and a unanimous vote by board members was required. "One 'no' vote and you're dead in the water," McMillen said. As with all maintenance issues, Testa said, "We're at the mercy of our vendors."

"People owe Jim (Poprock) some gratitude. He saved us money by discovering the leak. I like him having additional eyes for us," Testa said, adding "if the leak had continued unaddressed, repairs

could have more than doubled the cost." He said it was unfortunate the pool would experience downtime while parts were on order, remarking, "We're at the mercy of our vendors. Life doesn't work like Amazon."

The main focus of the homeowners BoD is to "keep up property values," McMillen explained, adding, "Our fiduciary responsibility is to not waste money." An ongoing major expense was the barrier arms at two entrances. The nearly weekly need for repairs exceeded the budgeted amount by four times before the decision was made to remove the arms to avoid additional expense to homeowners.

The board president also reminded homeowners the gates were not intended for security; the community's governing documents define their purpose as "privacy."

Testa shared, recently his office was inundated with calls regarding HOA violation notices sent to many Solera residents...including the board president... regarding dormant foliage mistakenly classified as dead and requiring replacement. Testa and McMillen apologized for the premature notices and explained many homeowners view the notice as a "violation," however the letter states it is a "courtesy notice." The wording of the notice, which may seem terse, is mandated by the state. The purpose of the notices is to maintain standards in the community and thereby maintain property value. The two are reviewing the courtesy notices process regarding landscaping.

Both McMillen and Testa lavished kudos on the office staff and board members. "These people do a lot of work. I don't even have to ask them," Testa said. McMillen agreed, adding many board members voluntarily attend meetings with vendors "to be educated. They spend a lot of time outside of meetings," she added.

McMillen and Testa urged Solera residents to attend monthly HOA meetings and reminded, there are many openings for home owners to become involved in the community's committees and clubs.

—Sam Wagmeister