
July

PRAIRIE WOODS

HOA Special Edition Newsletter

2024

President's Message

Rich Aguilar

I am certain you can guess the topic of this special edition newsletter just by looking at the picture on the right. Yes, you are correct. Mailboxes!

Hopefully, you read the regular July newsletter where we stressed that all our mailboxes were in compliance with USPS specs and that you could disregard any notice(s) you may have received regarding raising the height of your mailbox.

Most of you should be aware that all mailbox posts on the meadows side of our subdivision were replaced in 2023. This work was performed by an experienced contractor who specialized in mailbox post installation and was familiar with USPS specifications. I can assure you that all the installations are within the specifications USPS currently has listed on its website.



I met with the Island Lake Postmaster on Friday (7/19) to discuss the notices that have been placed in all our mailboxes. I first advised her of the above facts and emphasized that all our mailboxes are within the USPS specifications on the USPS website. I further advised her that one of our residents observed a USPS employee measuring the mailbox heights and noted that the employee was measuring from the grass to the bottom of the mailbox which would account for the variance in notices as some state the mailbox needs to be raised five inches while others state the mailbox needs to be raised six, seven, or even eight inches. The USPS website states that the height measurement should be made from the street level to the bottom of the mailboxes. Finally, I advised her that any requested change would likely result in a substantial expense to the HOA.

The Postmaster's response was sympathetic to our dilemma. She was aware that all our mailbox posts were recently replaced. She claimed that even she was caught off guard when new vehicles were delivered to the Island Lake Post Office without any prior notice. The problem with the new vehicles is that the bottom window height of the vehicle is forty-seven inches from street level.

She agreed that the USPS employee employed improper techniques while measuring mailbox heights but stated that our mailboxes are still not within new USPS specifications imposed by the USPS District Office. She apologized that the USPS website is not up to date, but she is not

responsible for making those changes. She also wanted our residents to know that our residents are not the only people effected by this new mandate. The mandate applies to all Island Lake and Wauconda residents and will eventually apply nationwide. She ended her response by stating that the deadline listed on the notices will be extended as she understands that the HOA must rely on a contractor who may or may not be able to make the corrections by the listed deadline. **She assured me that our residents will continue to receive mail beyond the deadline listed in the notices.**

My only real problem with my meeting with the Postmaster was that she could not or would not produce any notice from the USPS District Office mandating the new mailbox specifications. I would like to see this with my own eyes, and I am making every effort to obtain it from another source.

Your HOA Board is working diligently to resolve this issue. After inspecting the mailbox posts we are optimistic that the problem can be resolved by detaching the mailbox support arms, drilling two additional holes on each side of the post, and reattaching the support arms to the post. This would result in our mailboxes being within the newly mandated specifications at a significantly lower cost than we had originally anticipated.

This will be discussed at length at the next regularly scheduled HOA Board meeting on August 9th at 6:30 pm. We hope to see all of you there. Please visit our website at www.prairiewoodshoa.com for complete details for the meeting.