

# R E P O R T

---

## *Message from the President-*

*By: Bruce Tobis*

Greetings, River Piners. The most significant decision of the year so far was the approval by the Board of a new three-year management contract with McShane and Associates. Staying with the same firm implies some level of satisfaction with performance, but both the current Board and McShane are looking forward to finding additional improvements in what we do and how we do it.

We've also approved contracts for the re-staining of entry door porches for 2016. As usual, roughly one third of our units will have their entry porches taken care of this summer. Like last year, the work will be split between two contractors.

At least one co-owner got the impression that our snow removal during the storm of February 24-25 was not as good as it should be. I can say that because I'm that co-owner. We reported our dissatisfaction to the contractor, and noticed some improvement with the succeeding snowfalls.

One effort to improve what we do and how we do it is underway, with preliminary results ready for your review and described in this newsletter. The rules regarding acceptable use of the Common Element, as well as the procedures that are followed in the case of a rules violation, need to be clearer to allow fair implementation. This isn't a question of having a greater or lesser number of rules, or of making rules more or less restrictive, but of making the rule descriptions practical and less ambiguous. So, in the reminder of this

newsletter you'll find a collection of related articles:

- An introduction to the Compliance Committee; this will be the mechanism by which a potential violation is first evaluated, and which will allow any eventual appeal to the Board to be meaningful.
- The text of revised rules regarding plantings in the Common Element.
- A newly drafted list of rules to guide co-owners in acceptable use of the Common Element.
- A flowchart that shows the different ways that a violation might be treated, with variations due to how, or whether, the co-owner responds.

So far you're hearing about all of this mostly through one person, but please be aware that your Board is fully involved in all aspects of the work on the rules, and the results represent a solid consensus. Your reactions and comments, of course, are welcome, either at our Spring meeting or at any time prior to that.

Rules and rules changes cannot become operational until 30 days after co-owners have been notified, and so the plan is to draft the final text of the rules after the Spring meeting, run that past the Board for approval, and then mail copies to each co-owner. We hope that individual co-owners will then use the 30-day waiting period to bring their own surroundings into compliance or submit requests for approval for any decorations or plantings that they have and would like to keep and which require approval.

## Obituaries

We have recently lost one of the Founding Fathers of River Pines Condos. Charles Schroeder passed away on March 13, 2016 at 84.

He and his wife, Beth, moved in here when the first condos were built. He was active with the Board from 1989-2001. He served as a Vice President, Director and President in 2000-1.

Chuck was a Navy veteran, also an avid skier and golfer with his partner, Beth. They traveled with the Livonia Ski Club for many years. He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.  
- Joyce Brandemihl

*It is also with sadness that we report long term residents Joanne O'Bryan and Delores Delaney have also passed away.*



### River Pines Board of Directors

<b>Bruce Tobis</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>Jan Hall</b>	<b>Vice President</b>
<b>Barbara Lee</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
<b>Joyce Brandemihl</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>Glenda Wilkinson</b>	<b>Director</b>
<b>Lin Whiteman</b>	<b>Director</b>
<b>Dennis Connolly</b>	<b>Director</b>

#### Management Company

#### McShane and Associates

6230 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 200  
West Bloomfield, MI 48322

Phone: 248-855-6492

Hours—8:30 am—5 pm (Spring)

For Emergencies after 4:00 p.m. call:  
248-456-0233

## Welcome New Co-Owners

By: The Welcoming Committee

River Pines would like to welcome to our neighborhood the following new co-owners. Please update your latest directory, with the information below.

**Dale Bjorklund & Judy McGibbon Bjorklund**  
**22050 River Ridge Trail**  
**(248-478-4419)**



## Mark Your Calendars

The River Pines Annual Garage Sale is being held **Friday, June 10th and Saturday, June 11th, 2016.**

Posters will be going up soon at the mail stations, on the website, and by e-mail on how you can sign up to participate in this annual event.

### RRRASOC's Spring Hazardous Waste Event:

May 7th

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Oakland Community College  
Orchard Ridge Campus – Lot 8  
27055 Orchard Lake Road

Visit <http://rrrasoc.org/> for more information.



**BLUELINE**  
INVESTIGATIONS

Michael G. Reilly

(734) 564-8008

[info@BlueLineProtection.com](mailto:info@BlueLineProtection.com)

37637 Five Mile Rd. Suite 161

Livonia, MI 48154

"Law Enforcement Experience is our Specialty"

# **Lighting Committee**

The River Pines Lighting Committee is pleased to report that we have another new volunteer. The current Lighting Committee is:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Contact</u>
21780 - 22255 River Ridge Tr.	Frank Pilzner
Silver Ridge Ct.	248-426-6851
Lone Pine Ln.	Phil Plaga
Court Ridge Court	248-426-0143
Lancrest Ct.	PPlaga@yahoo.com
River Pines Ct.	Bruce Tobis
Blue Spruce Dr.	248-471-5981
River Pines Dr.	btobis@yahoo.com
Knollwood Lane	
White Pine Tr.	Mark Laktzian
Red Pine Drive	248-761-6328
22265 - 22385 River Ridge Tr.	mlakt12@gmail.com
River Ridge Ct.	Al Uema
21615 - 21770 River Ridge Tr.	248-471-0438

The volunteers on this Committee replace burned out light bulbs in the two fixtures adjacent to your garage door. All that the co-owner needs to do is report a burned out bulb to the volunteer who is responsible for their location.

If you are interested in the Committee or have a concern with the garage lighting, please contact the Committee chairman, Bruce.



# **Compliance Committee**

The Compliance Committee has been formed in order to render an independent opinion to the co-owner as to the presence or absence of a violation of the Bylaws. The Committee is comprised of both non-Board and Board members and serve as the first line review of any potential violation. The chairperson of this committee will not be a Board member. In the event a co-owner receives a violation notice and disagrees with the decision of the Compliance Committee, an appeal can be made to the Board. With minimal Board membership on the Committee, this procedure promises that the appeal process will be meaningful.

Please refer to the proposed Compliance Flowchart in this newsletter (pages 8 and 9) to see how violations that begin with the Compliance Committee will be handled.

# ***Proposed new rules for decorations and the use of the Common Element***

The following is a summary of proposed new rules and regulations regarding decorations and the use of the Common Element. It will be a new section of the River Pines Handbook.

The Board is responsible for maintaining the value of Association property, and this requires protection of its structural integrity as well as attention to its appearance. The purpose here is not to make rules that are more or less strict than what we've been used to, but rather to create a consistent approach to how we choose to use our surroundings. We want an approach that will be considered reasonable by all co-owners and which will be summarized in a set of rules that are clear and unambiguous and easy to implement objectively.

Some of the rules below refer to actions that may be allowed with approval. Though the responsibility for approval will always rest with the Board, the Board decisions are usually made based on recommendations of the relevant Committee. If any part of a structure is involved, the Architectural Control Committee, with its Modification Request Form, should be the typical way to get started. For plantings and other issues that involve only the appearance of the grounds, the Grounds Committee would handle the request.

These rules are based on relevant portions of the Bylaws, which are quoted below prior to the list of rules.

## Decorations and use of the Common Element - Draft April 2016

From the Bylaws: *No Co-owner shall make alterations in exterior appearance or make structural modifications to the Co-owner's Unit . . . or make changes in any of the Common Elements, Limited or General, without the advance express written approval of the Board of Directors . . .*

*No unsightly condition shall be maintained on any patio or porch and only furniture and equipment consistent with the normal and reasonable use of such areas shall be permitted to remain there during seasons when such areas are reasonably in use and no furniture or equipment of any kind shall be stored thereon during seasons when such areas are not reasonably in use.*

*Sidewalks, yards, landscaped areas, driveways, roads, parking areas, and porches shall not be obstructed in any way nor shall they be used for purposes other than for which they are reasonably and obviously intended. No bicycles, vehicles, chairs, benches or other objects may be left unattended on or about the Common Elements.*

*Each Co-owner shall maintain his/her Unit and any Limited Common Elements appurtenant thereto for which he/she has maintenance responsibility in a safe, clean and sanitary condition.*

Here are the proposed rules:

1. Anything to be attached to the structure needs prior approval. Flagpoles, security lighting and cameras, and dish antennas are routinely approved, within guidelines.
2. Decorations cannot be fastened to the structure, and decorations that require attachments to the structure with nails or screws, or drilling holes in the structure, will not be approved.
3. Flagpoles must be mounted on the wood on the front of the garage. Flags and seasonal banners must be in good condition and removed or replaced when weathered, faded, or torn.

### ***Proposed new rules for decorations and the use of the Common Element (continued)***

4. With regard to holiday decorations, prior written approval within the confines of existing rules for seasonal decorations is not required. These items are time limited, and addressed separately.
5. Personal decorations, on but not attached to unit, may be allowed with prior approval.
6. No items can be stored under any porch or deck or around the perimeter of unit.
7. Decorations on a deck or porch are not restricted, provided that they are consistent with the “normal and reasonable” use cited in the Bylaws and do not exceed 36” in height. For safety, no decorations are allowed on deck or porch steps. Up to 5 items are allowed in the area adjacent to the porch, provided that they do not interfere with landscaping and do not exceed 36” in height; up to 5 items are allowed in the area adjacent to a deck, provided that they do not interfere with landscaping and do not exceed 36” in height; up to 5 items are allowed in any area for which the co-owner has received approval to alter the landscaping, provided that they do not exceed 36” in height.
8. Trellis’s and shepherd hooks in good condition, and used as a support for climbing flowers or plants, may be used during planting season and are exempt from the item count limits and the 36 inch height restriction.
9. Other decorative items shall not be located outside of the deck or porch areas without prior approval.
10. Food or housing for animals is not permitted in any part of the Limited or General Common Element.
11. A maximum of two bird feeders or bird baths are allowed in the Common Area, with prior approval.
12. Co-owners may not place decorative items in mulched areas. The area around the two shrubs in front of the garage is typically mulched, but the mulch there has been replaced with stone or gravel then decorative items can be placed there if approval is granted.
13. Plantings may be allowed in other mulched areas with prior approval. These must be maintained by the co-owner. Please refer to the section on Plantings for more detail.
14. Plastic flowers are not allowed.
15. The co-owner is responsible to maintain any edging that they use around the perimeter of areas landscaped by them in Common Areas.
16. Personal items placed in limited or general common areas cannot interfere with Association provided landscaping or snow removal.
17. All lawn furniture (chairs, tables, patio umbrellas, gliders, furniture cushions, etc.) need to be removed from the entry porch from November 1st through March 31st. During this time, barbeque grills may be left on a deck if covered with a black, brown, or tan cover designed for the grill. Other lawn furniture typically used on a porch or deck may be kept on a deck between November 1st and March 31st if covered with a black, brown, or tan cover designed for the piece and if not extending above the deck railing.
18. Bonfires are not allowed under any circumstances; fire pits are not allowed on any part of any Common Element or on any porch or deck.
19. Unlicensed vehicles may be kept in the co-owner’s garage with Board approval.
20. Cars may not encroach on any sidewalk.
21. For Sale and Open House signs are allowed per the existing rule.
22. One security sign is allowed in the area between the sidewalk and garage.
23. If leaving trash out the evening before pick-up, co-owners are encouraged to use metal or plastic containers.
24. Pet waste and receptacles for pet waste must not be stored outside of any co-owner unit, and should only be outside the unit when included with the rest of the garbage on trash pick-up days.

## ***Proposed new rules for plantings in the Common Element***

The following is a draft of proposed new rules and regulations regarding plantings. It will replace the section on plantings that is currently on pages 42-45 of the River Pines Handbook.

The Board believes that co-owners who are interested in adding flowers or other foliage near their unit to improve its appearance should be encouraged to do so. That is the motivation behind the rules revision. The “Common Element,” however, is literally everything outdoors, and as the Association has responsibility for its maintenance the Association must insist on having the right to grant or deny any proposal for altering the Common Element.

Note that the “Alteration Agreement” referred to below is still to be created by the Grounds Committee. Until then, any written communication that is clear and complete can be used to describe what you want to do and ask for approval.

### Plantings - Draft April 2016

*From the Bylaws: No Co-owner shall perform any landscaping or plant any trees, shrubs or flowers or place any ornamental materials upon the Common Elements unless approved by the Association in writing. Any such approved landscaping . . . shall be . . . in a manner consistent with the landscaping in other portions of the Condominium Premises. The Co-owner shall be responsible for the maintenance of any such approved landscaping . . . In the event that such Co-owner fails to adequately maintain such landscaping . . . to the satisfaction of the Association, the Association shall have the right to perform such maintenance and assess and collect from the Co-owner the cost thereof . . .*

There are three (3) categories of grounds:

1. Landscaped areas around the perimeter of the units, outside of the courtyards, that are maintained by the Association including shrub trimming and replacement.
  - a) Co-owners are not allowed to remove grass in the Common Areas and create additional planting areas around their units, unless the area is next to the unit and approval is obtained from the Grounds Committee. These potential new areas (next to a unit) will remain the responsibility of the co-owner after approval.
  - b) No flower planting is allowed in these Common Areas without approval from the Grounds Committee.
  - c) A co-owner who wishes additional plantings, other than flowers, must follow the following procedure:
    - An Alteration Agreement must be filled out to define the type of trees and bushes, their full growth height and diameter dimensions, and their exact proposed location including distance from buildings and other trees or shrubs in the area. This request will be evaluated by the Grounds Committee, with appeal available to the Board if denied by the Grounds Committee. The Grounds Committee reserves the right to deny a request if the planting of such tree or shrub would result in significantly increased landscaping costs due to the need to use smaller machines or more landscaping resources. The Association will then maintain them for their useful life. This includes trimming and mulching at the location in which they are planted. Mulching will be included when and if other trees and shrubs in the complex are mulched.
    - Trees must have at least a 2-1/2” diameter trunk.
    - Shrubs must be at least 24” or 2 gallon size.
    - When fully grown, trees and shrubs shall not cover the driveway, walkway, street or the roof of any unit.

## ***Proposed new rules for plantings in the Common Element (continued)***

### 2) Courtyards

a) Co-owners may install landscape materials within their assigned courtyards without getting Board consent.

b) Any modifications that will affect drainage of the courtyard, the unit basement or the adjacent unit basement will be the modifying co-owner's responsibility.

### 3) Natural areas, so designated by the Association, are non-landscaped and intended to be left in a natural state.

a) The Association, except for situations such as a dead tree that may fall and possibly endanger a building, will not maintain these specific areas beyond occasional grass cutting.

b) If a co-owner wishes to do any planting in these areas, they must follow the guidelines above for common element flowers and plantings.

### Other planting restrictions/guidelines:

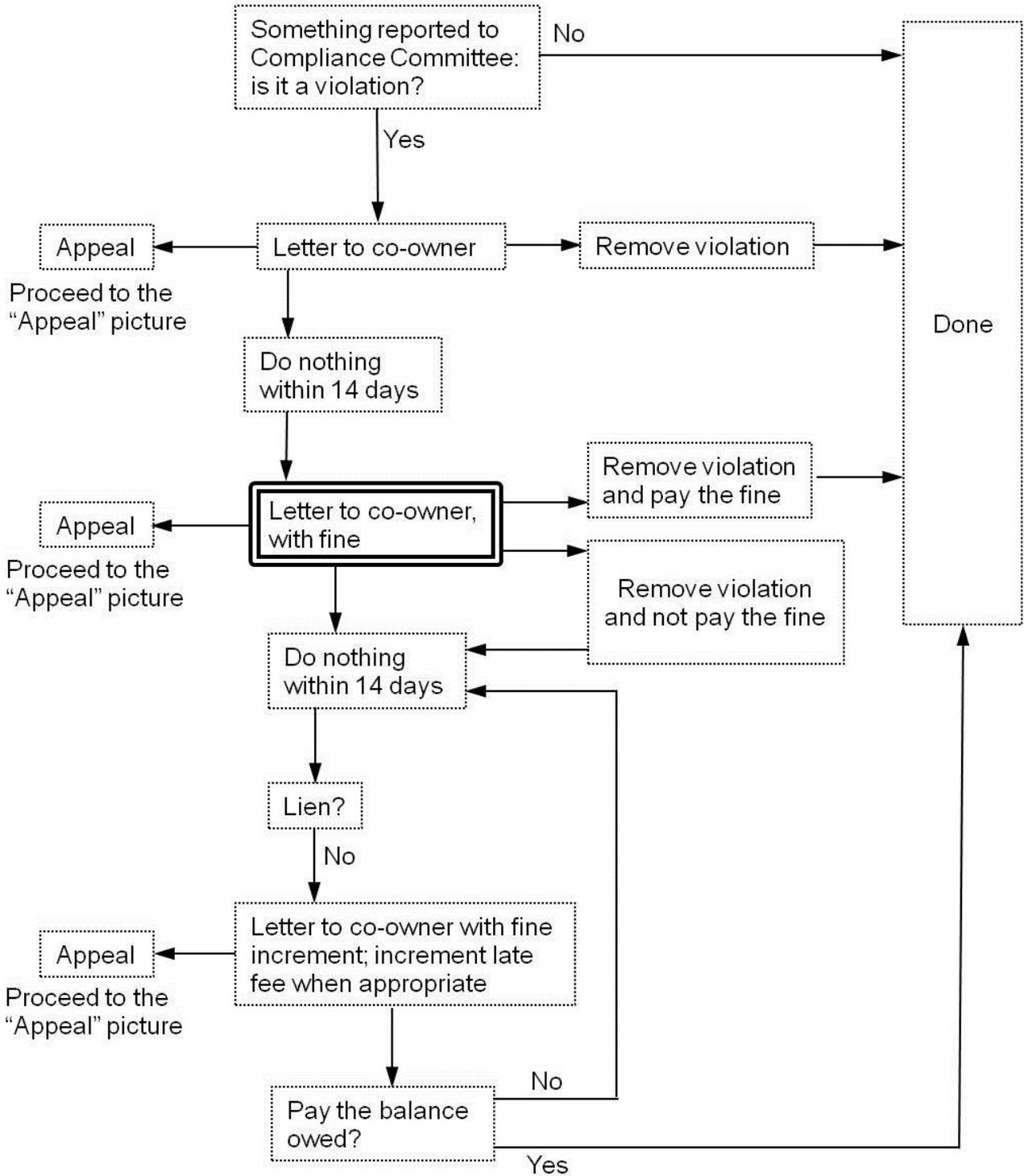
1. Co-owners may only plant flowers and individual bushes which do not exceed 3 feet in height in the common elements near their units (that is: in their courtyards; between the sidewalk and the garage; in a portion of the common element adjacent to their unit for which planting approval has been given).
2. Hedges are not allowed.
3. Hanging baskets are allowed but no holes are permitted in the bricks for hangers. Hanging baskets from a hook fastened to the wooden portion of the unit is not allowed without approval.
4. Flower plantings must not interfere with the mowing of the lawns or require the use of additional lawn service resources. If such plantings do require additional lawn service resources or other community resources, the co-owner may be required to remove the flower plantings and restore the area to its original condition.
5. If the co-owner fails to maintain their plantings, and the result is considered detrimental to the appearance of River Pines, the co-owner may be required to remove the flower plantings and restore the area to its original condition.
6. Plastic flowers are not allowed.

### Requirements for all planting approvals:

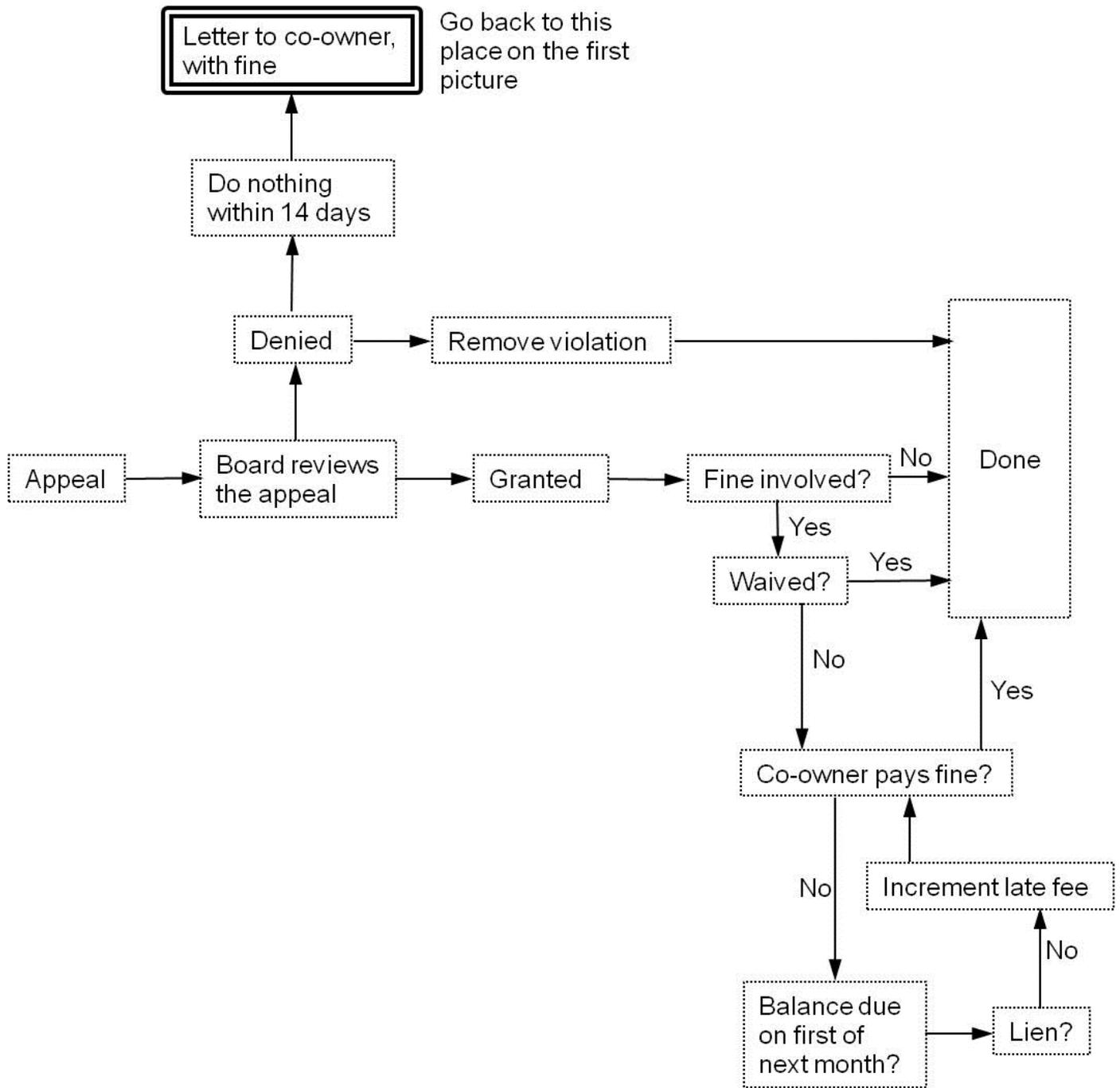
1. Completion of a Alteration Agreement that details the locations and types of all flowers, trees, and shrubs that are to be planted, including the distance from buildings and other plantings
2. The request for an alteration is submitted to the Grounds Committee for review. The Committee evaluation will consider the location, consistency with existing landscaping, and the effect on landscaping resources. If a request is denied, an appeal to the Board is available.
3. If a request is approved, the co-owner will handle flower plantings. For trees or shrubs that will be maintained by the Association, the co-owner must pay the purchase cost. The Grounds Committee reserves the right to deny a request if it would result in significantly increased landscaping costs (due to the need to use smaller machines) and/or more landscaping resources.

# Proposed Compliance Procedure

This Compliance Committee has been formed in order to render an independent opinion to the co-owner as to the presence or absence of a violation of the Bylaws. The Committee is comprised of both non-Board and Board members and serve as the first line review of any potential violation.



***Proposed Compliance Procedure (continued)***



It is proposed that if the co-owner takes no action on a violation over the 14 day period of time specified, then it would be interpreted as second violation? With that idea, the proposed fine schedule would look like:

First violation	No fine shall be levied
Second violation or second notice of an unattended violation	\$50.00 fine
Third violation or third notice of an unattended violation	\$100.00 fine
Subsequent violations or notices of an unattended violation	\$500.00 fine

McShane and Associates  
6230 Orchard Lake Road  
Suite 200  
West Bloomfield, MI 48322

Phone: 248-855-6492



**IMPORTANT  
RULES PROPOSAL  
ENCLOSED!**

*To be discussed further at the:*  
**Spring Information Meeting**  
May 18th, 2016 7:00pm  
Shannon Hall, The Costick Center