

Emailed 12-12-2023

Good Day—We are providing this friendly reminder about the upcoming dues increase on January 5, 2024. **You are in the group of payees that doesn't have to take any action.** Your payments will adjust automatically based on your previously submitted auto-debit authorization.

For your information, we have expanded the ACH form to include our historical business practices. This form is provided to you as strictly informational. Again, **you do not have to take any action** unless you want to change your payment method. If that is the case, the form notes the steps you need to follow. It is attached to this email for your convenience and may also be found at:

<https://canterwooddiv12step.org/page14/downloads-11/files/2023-12-9%20CW%20Div%2012%20STEP%20ACH%20Debit%20Form.pdf> for future reference.

Happy Holidays

Your Canterwood Division 12 STEP Board

A STEP Story--Lessons For Everyone

A mystery was unfolding one afternoon for a Division 12 resident as their alarm pierced the calm of the day. Was it a tragedy, comedy, or documentary—you be the judge but regardless lessons abound. Professionals were summoned—three companies in total due to a number of factors—the last based on discounts offered by Aadvanced, our Operations and Maintenance contractor. The tanks were full, odors wafted as the professions scurried about. After pumping the tanks—they determined the filter was not plugged, the pump was pumping, the floats that trigger pumping were operational, and the control box was fine. The last remaining thing was the outlet line to the STEP system. It must be plugged. Perhaps the backflow preventor had stuck shut or roots. It was late, dark, cold, and with empty tanks—waiting was possible. Phase 2 would be needed. An estimate for jetting, camera work, and likely additional pumping was provided (\$2,300 more) and the truck rolled away. The STEP Board got involved because fingers were now pointing at problems in the main system, however several things did not make sense.

The estimate appeared to include redundant/non-sequential work, missed a few points about special equipment needed to do the assessment, and Canterwood prices were not applied. After all, it was late, dark, and people were tired. Follow-up, scope clarification, and rate adjustments resulted in an \$800 reduction--real money. Phase 2 was placed on hold for a few weeks. The homeowner did not understand that the system had rightly been turned off and hoped silent alarms meant the problem was gone. But tanks filled, toilets gurgled, and odors quickly returned. Time to call the professional again. Since this mystery occurred out of the blue, postulations began: Was the grate near the tank lids related in some way? Were the 3 lids at fault? Two had been replaced but was the third lid bad? Before the Phase 2 team arrived, one thing needed to be verified by the Board—was the shut-off valve at the street open? As it turns out, it was closed. Once opened, and the system turned on, the homeowner's world became immediately better. The homeowner had been proactive and trusted the professionals—to include their gardener.

The gardener did it. He apparently closed the valve during irrigation winterization. The other professionals were correct—something was preventing flows from leaving the homeowner's system—the shut-off valve.

Lessons:

The odors were emitted from a bad/unsealed tank lid.

The rain drainage grate located a foot from the bad tank lid illustrates how rain enters the system and increases overall monthly treatment costs and excessive pumping.

The gardeners need to know where your irrigation valves and STEP valves are located.

The professionals should have checked the shutoff valve but didn't.

Aadvanced should have provided the Canterwood prices without intervention.

Aadvanced's Phase 2 bid should have noted efforts were sequential and not a fixed price.

So this mystery was solved but illustrates things for homeowners and Board consideration. Fees increased this year—the exact cause of which is still to be determined. Did our community simply produce more output? Did we have a serious infiltration problem that this situation was a part of? Was it all due a failing flow meter (which is currently being replaced)? Was it a combination of all of the above? Time—and some sleuthing by your Board—will tell.

As a final note, tank lid issues are not isolated. Last summer, system access was needed by another homeowner. Cracks were apparent once their buried lids were exposed. "It was not a big deal" the homeowner proclaimed, but buried lids cannot be maintained or inspected and do end up negatively affecting the homeowner and the community.