



BERNARDO SANTA FE CAMERAS

Most of you may be aware that several burglaries in the neighborhood have generated the creation of a Neighborhood Watch organization to look out for one another. BSFHOA encouraged its formation and paid for part of the NW signs recently installed. In addition, a proposal was made from Montclair that Bernardo Santa Fe join with them in purchasing and installing video cameras at each gate. Your board took a lengthy look at this and researched the pros and cons of such a system keeping in mind our obligations to do the best for all our residents and spend your money effectively.

What we discovered is that, for the money spent now and in the future, video equipment is not always a sure bet to prevent further break-ins. It sounds like an instant answer because the world is installing cameras everywhere, in cities, in airplane cockpits, in stores and hotels and even around individual homes. It seems we are all on camera most everywhere these days. Some people think that all this technology is personally invasive and ruins the sanctity of a peaceful life. Those cameras are pointed at **specific** areas where trouble may occur; for example hotels install them to patrol their hallways. In that situation they are constantly monitored by someone in a central location within the hotel.

Trying to patrol our neighborhood with two cameras at each gate is not where the action is. Those cameras would be recording hundreds of vehicle entrances

and exits each day with no possible way of knowing who is a burglar and who is not. Furthermore, we don't have employees to monitor hours and hours of video. We would be waiting for a burglary to occur and then trying to guess which vehicle was the culprit. One of your neighbors, a former policeman, told us that cameras at the gate would be a "waste of money". The police are not going to trace dozens of license plates without a direct link between the vehicle and the burglary, and we can't go around making unsubstantiated accusations against all non-residents. Any cameras at the gate are not going to see which house was burglarized. After all, we have no proof that the criminals in our recent burglaries used a car and didn't just scale a fence or wall. They weren't carrying anything heavy when they escaped.

Furthermore, we can't point a camera at everyone's front and back door and wait for the next break-in. That would be an invasion of your privacy, against the law and excessively expensive. The territory we are trying to cover is too large and spread out to expect 4 little cameras to be effective at anything, which is what our research told us. Many HOAs have wasted lots of money expecting miracles from the latest tech equipment while giving residents false hope that they are protected. Businesses that use lots of cameras have the profit motive and legal mandates to highly protect their customers while they are on the premises. That is why they can pay for it all.

We might also add that research tells us that many HOAs have miscalculated the cost of maintenance required to keep these video systems going (They are known to fail exactly when you need them.). Montclair was adding the cost of replacing or reinforcing the door to their gate shack to keep vandals and thieves from stealing their equipment. It will be a sitting duck unattended outside the gate with video cameras shining down as an instant give-away that there may be something worth stealing inside. BSF has already repaired broken windows in our shack.

Many of you have paid for private security systems that monitor only your house. Some of you may have no system at all. Watching your own house can only be done by you or by one of your good neighbors as part of Neighborhood Watch. That is why the police highly recommend that neighborhoods organize as yours has. We are told that our NW group is up and running. Your board fully encourages their efforts. They are the close up eyes on your street and house that will really make the difference.

The CC&Rs and Bylaws do not mention that security is mandated. They merely give the association and your board responsibility for maintaining what we were given by the developer. Taking on new requirements will eventually raise the cost of HO dues and ignore the founding documents we were told to follow. Buildings with round the clock surveillance and human security will raise your dues by hundreds of dollars.

Some people have pointed to the gates themselves as an indication that the HOA is responsible for your security. After all, we all have security codes to activate them. If you really look at it, they keep most of the public out, but they are not a failsafe for neighborhood security. How many of you or your friends etc. have cruised through the gate following someone who opened it ahead of you? It adds prestige to the neighborhood and creates partial security, but the gates are far from 100 % effective in keeping the bad guys out. That is just reality.

Following our fiduciary obligations, your board just didn't find that adding two security cameras at our gate were worth the money or within your best interests.

Sincerely,
BSFHOA Board