

The Sterling Voices

Where Your Voice Matters

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An Independent Newsletter for Sterling Oaks Homeowners

BREAKING — GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

New Declaration Recorded June 5: What Every Homeowner Needs to Know

On **June 5, 2026**, the Association recorded a **Second Restatement of the Amended and Restated Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for Sterling Oaks** — together with restated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws — in the Public Records of Collier County (Instrument No. 6834174, Official Records Book 6595, Page 1950). The 132-page instrument replaces our community's governing documents **in their entirety**.

According to the recorded Certificate, the restatement was approved by the membership at a meeting held on **March 19, 2026**, executed on May 21, 2026 by the Board President, and became effective upon recording. Every owner, tenant, and guest at Sterling Oaks is now governed by this new document. Below is a plain-English summary of the changes most likely to affect you, your home, and your wallet.

WHAT CHANGED

Six Changes That Affect Your Home and Your Wallet

1. Mandatory Painting and Pressure Cleaning — Billed to You (§9.1.3)

The new Declaration authorizes the Board to provide "exterior painting or pressure cleaning of all Lots on a **mandatory basis**," with the cost charged to owners as a **Specific Assessment**. In plain terms: the Board may now decide that homes will be painted or pressure-washed, arrange the work itself, and add the cost to your bill. Unlike fines, assessments can become a lien against your home if unpaid. Given the community-wide paint enforcement activity of 2025, homeowners should watch closely for any program adopted under this new authority.

2. Right of Entry and Abatement at Owner Expense (§15.3)

The Association may enter a Lot to "summarily abate or remove" any structure, thing, or condition it deems a violation — at the owner's expense, charged as a Specific Assessment. The Declaration states the Association "shall not be liable in any manner for trespass, abatement or removal."

3. A New Conduct Covenant (§14.2)

A new provision prohibits "abusive, harassing, intimidating, or aggressive behavior" and "profane, obscene, threatening [sic], or otherwise offensive language or conduct" directed at other residents, Board or committee members, management, employees, agents, or vendors. Civility is a value we all share — but residents should be aware that terms like "otherwise offensive language" are not defined, and violations of use restrictions can carry fines. Homeowners retain the statutory right to speak at meetings and to petition their association under Chapter 720, Florida Statutes.

4. Tighter Leasing Rules (§9.1.4, §14.1)

Leases must run a minimum of **one month** and a maximum of **one year**, and a Lot may be leased no more than **three times per calendar year**. Notably, merely **advertising** a rental for a shorter term is itself deemed a violation, subject

to fines and suspension of the right to lease. Owners who rent their homes — and owners who may someday — should review Section 14.6 carefully.

5. The Fining Process (§15.4)

Fines and use-right suspensions still require written notice, a hearing before an independent **Compliance Committee** of at least three members (who may not be officers, directors, employees, or their close relatives), and a **majority vote of that committee approving the fine before it may be imposed**. The committee must issue its written decision within 21 days of the hearing. These protections mirror Section 720.305(2)(b), Florida Statutes — they are your statutory rights, and no fine may lawfully be imposed without committee approval.

6. Board Authority Over Violation Disputes (§15.1)

New language provides that disagreements concerning violations, "including interpretation of the Rules," shall be determined by the Board of Directors, "whose interpretation and whose remedial action shall control." Owners should understand that this language operates alongside — not in place of — the statutory hearing rights described above and the right of any party to seek relief in court.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: DECEMBER 5, 2026

The new Declaration provides that **any procedural challenge to an amendment must be made within six (6) months of its recordation** (§19.2.1). Because the Second Restatement was recorded on June 5, 2026, that window closes on or about **December 5, 2026**. If you have questions about how the March 19 vote was noticed, conducted, or counted, the time to ask them — and to inspect the records — is now, not later.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Your Rights Under Chapter 720, Florida Statutes

- **Inspect the records.** Under §720.303(5), every member may inspect and copy the association's official records — including meeting notices, ballots, proxies, sign-in sheets, and the vote certification for the March 19, 2026 meeting — within 10 business days of a written request.
- **No fine without committee approval.** Under §720.305(2)(b), a fine or suspension may not be imposed unless the independent committee approves it by majority vote after you have been offered a hearing on at least 14 days' notice.
- **Read the document yourself.** The full Second Restatement is a public record. Search the Collier County Clerk of Courts official records (CollierClerk.com) for Instrument No. 6834174 or OR Book 6595, Page 1950 — or request a copy from management.
- **Ask questions.** Members have the right to attend Board meetings, to speak on agenda items, and to petition the Board. Good governance starts with informed owners.

FROM THE EDITOR**Why This Edition Matters**

A community's declaration is its constitution. When it is rewritten "in its entirety," every homeowner deserves a clear, timely explanation of what changed — especially provisions that create new assessment powers, new entry rights, and new restrictions on conduct and leasing. This special edition is offered in that spirit: read the document, know your rights, attend the meetings, and make your voice heard. That is, after all, where your voice matters.

Questions, corrections, or topics you'd like covered in a future issue? Reply to this email — reader questions shape our coverage.