



THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

July 2015



Calendar of Events

July 18th (Sat) - Hampstead Bulk Trash day

Aug 3rd (Mon) - HOA Meeting - NC Senior Center 6:30pm

Aug 4th (Tue) - National Night Out

Aug 25th (Tue) - September HOA Meeting -NCF Pavilion 6:30pm

Sep 21st (Mon) - By-Law Meeting - NC Senior Center 7pm

Oct 5th (Mon) - HOA Meeting - NC Senior Center 6:30pm

Help us keep you up to date on community news and events by sending us your updated email address!



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A Message from the HOA President

Greeting Neighbors,

For those of you who were not in attendance, I would like to provide you with a summary of our annual meeting. Also below are action items that were discussed. Please read below as your input is important to us.

Annual Meeting: Our annual meeting was held on Monday May 4th, 2015. Sadly, there were 35 households represented out of the 220 in our community. A big “Thank You” to those who attended! Guest included Mayor Chris Nevin, Police Chief Ken Meekins and several candidates for town council. Mayor Nevin spoke about the water main replacement project, Main St. revitalization and the addition of the Fuch’s Spice Company to Hampstead. The water main project will begin shortly and the revitalization project will begin shortly thereafter. Main Street will have some sort of construction for the next 3-4 years. Chief Meekins reported once again crime remains very low in our town. Hampstead remains one the safest places to live in Maryland. The Chief also stated he will be retiring within the next year. He has been a great partner and he will be missed. The committee chairmen gave their reports and answered questions. Potential issues (see below) facing the HOA were discussed. Your newly elected officers for the 2015-2016 term are: President - Ray Baker, Vice President - Doug Torgeson, Treasurer - Cathy Hlubb, Secretary - Matt Muller, Architectural Committee –Bruce Steger, Land Use – Dan Schiller and Social Committee – Ted McCrobie.

State of the HOA: There was discussion at the annual meeting regarding issues the HOA is facing. Input was given by those in attendance and the HOA board of directors is researching each item to see what would be in the best interest of our community. As always, we welcome any ideas you may have.

By-law changes were not able to be voted on because we did not have the necessary participation of the community. We had 35 households represented and we needed to have 66 2/3% to approve the changes. We MUST get these changes approved for the association to function and move forward. That being said we have scheduled another special community meeting for Monday September 21st @ 7PM to vote on these issues. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. You will be receiving a letter in the mail shortly.

Paving of HOA owned Roads and parking spaces. Recently we had a sink hole on the access road behind the townhomes. Luckily a storm water pipe (owned by the town) that runs under the road failed and the town picked up the entire cost. Had this been our issue it would have cost the HOA \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Initially we were unsure of the cause of the sink hole so we had several paving contractors take a look. While they were here, we asked them how much longer our existing HOA owned roads would last before needing to be resurfaced. Both said 3-5 years max. We have been budgeting for this large expense but did not expect it to be this soon. We received estimates based on the cost today: \$90,000 to \$100,000. We will be discussing how we are going to pay for this expense at the September meeting.

Each year our by-laws require us to have a review of our HOA books completed by a

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CPA. With the increasing cost of liability insurance, fewer CPAs are willing to perform reviews and those that do are charging \$800+/- year. We could get a reputable accounting firm (not a CPA) at ½ the cost. An amendment to our by-laws would be required to make this change.

Dues collection. The board of directors is looking into alternate ways to collect delinquent dues going forward. It was suggested we look into legal action, collection agencies and even publish the names in our newsletter. We are very willing to work with anyone who is experiencing a financial hardship. It is just wrong for homeowners to completely ignore the fact HOA dues need to be paid until a HOA board member comes knocking on their door. There will be no more door to door.

Architectural Modifications: Projects are being completed WITHOUT approval. Architectural Committee approval is required before beginning outdoor projects. If you have a project and you are not sure if it needs approval, please ask. We want to work with homeowners so you can get your projects approved and completed. The HOA has the authority to and will levy fines against homeowners who do not follow proper procedures.

Finally I would like to say "Thank you" to Lisa Baker, Joyce Williams and Ron Williams for their time served on the Board. The time and effort they put into this community is greatly appreciated and their talents will be missed.

Thanks,

Ray Baker



THANK YOU.....

The 2015 Easter Egg Hunt, held on Sat, March 28th at the Pavilion, was attended by 15 children. After col-

lecting almost 20 dozen eggs in the cold and snow, the children enjoyed cookies and drinks. Thank you to all who attended and assisted!!!!

 **Husqvarna**



*Hampstead Tool
Rentals*

Sparkey's Small Engine Repair

2027 Hanover Pike Hampstead, MD 21074

410-374-9461

Kawasaki
Engines

KOHLER
ENGINES

HONDA
ENGINES

BULK TRASH - SATURDAY, JUL 18th

REMINDER : THE ITEMS BELOW WILL NOT BE PICKED UP



- * Tires * Paint * Hazardous materials *
- * Engines * Construction waste *
- * Any appliance that contains Freon *



Hazardous waste must be disposed of privately. You may call Carroll County Landfill at 410-386-4550 or visit their website at <http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/recycle/landfill.asp> for questions concerning disposal of hazardous waste.

For more information email northcarrollfarmshoa@gmail.com

Save Money by Planting Trees

by Kim Brown



Planting the right tree in the right place is key to maximizing the energy-saving benefits that trees provide. When planted properly, a single tree can save a homeowner up to 20% on energy costs.

But trees do much more than provide energy savings to you, the homeowner. They also provide tangible benefits for the entire community: improved air quality, reduced storm water runoff, beautification of your neighborhood, reduced urban heat island effect, and a smaller carbon footprint, just to name a few.

The HOA is also looking for ways to reduce costs and are investigating ways for immediate savings as well as long term savings. How??? We are working to reduce our mowing costs. We have been advised by Tim Hare, Chief Inspector of Resource Management with Carroll County, that beyond the berms and into the drainage areas, we can reduce mowing to three times a year. This will bring us significant savings.

Looking to long term savings, we are working with Jonathan Bowman, our county's Forest Conservation Specialist, to reduce mowing even more. We are being considered for a grant that would give us many FREE trees (roughly 3' tall). Everything is in the early stages now, but this will be an excellent opportunity for our community. We have a backup opportunity with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation if this falls through. We are looking to plant along the fence in the common area to beautify it and block out the train tracks/back of businesses. We may also do a mass planting in one or two areas that are not utilized as playing fields. Five years post planting, these areas will no longer require mowing, saving money and will beautify our community.

Trees benefit you, as we will see a reduction in mowing costs, which will enable us to optimally use the membership dues. Trees will beautify our common area and provide needed shade. They will also help to filter all of the runoff from our community before it travels to the Chesapeake Bay, while cleaning the air.

How to help even more: Stay tuned for updates. We will need to provide the labor for tree planting. We are planning to have the trees in early fall. Email me if you are interested in other planting opportunities in our community. We will need many volunteers for tree planting. Beyond this, if you are interested in more community projects aimed at helping honeybees or monarchs, or the environment in general, drop me a line to get on a list! garden@gis.net

Musings of a befuddled Volunteer.....by Joyce Gober-Williams

Planning for North Carroll Farms Section 2, where we all reside, began in 1994. From its conception, the intent was a mixed housing neighborhood that would be incorporated into the Town of Hampstead. To do this, the "Farm" which was in Greenmount, was connected to the Town infrastructure including water and sewer and the Town in turn benefited from the tax base.

Construction began and as it was the new neighborhood within Carroll County, so it became the popular area and lots sold quickly. Some people actually slept in their cars to be the first to plunk down their check for the prime lot prior to the next increase in construction cost, or someone else purchasing the chosen local. It was the time of the housing boom. Interest rates were low, down payments were not required, and fancy accounting provided by the Developers Financial Partner allowed everyone who wanted to, the ability to "get in" on the market.

One of the selling points of the construction company, Masonry Homes, was to boast that North Carroll Farms had the lowest HOA fees in the County. Wow this is great! No money down, low variable interest rate mortgage and the lowest fees in the county. A traffic light just for the neighborhood, and the potential for a pool/activity building for private use of the residents. This was great! This is less than my current rent, or twice the house that I'm living in now! I want it!

What most of us didn't realize is that these were "Sales Pitches." There were no plans for any of the things that the salesman had promised. What resulted was, a neighborhood heading down a path where the minimal funding of the HOA is barely adequate to perform the basic maintenance as required by the Laws of the State of Maryland Real Property Code Section 14-201 as conveyed through the Covenants and By-Laws of the Incorporated Neighborhood. So as the neighborhood matures, this leaves a very lean-running HOA.

The dedicated volunteers who spend their time on the HOA Board and other committees should receive praise for keeping the cost down for all of us. I can't remember a time where a Thank You was given to the Board. Generally, a resident of the neighborhood will attend a monthly meeting if they have a complaint or want the HOA Board to act on their behalf. We all received the HOA By-Laws and Covenant documents regarding the "governing" of the neighborhood when we purchased our homes. About 75% of us are still original owners who have raised their children and now seeing them off to college, or enjoying grand-children. It's been 12-15 years now that the original owners have lived in their homes and the same questions continue to be asked.

Here are the most frequently asked questions and complaints:

What am I getting for my dues? Why can't you get those townhouse people to park in their parking bays? I have a handicap parking tag but a single family homeowner "verbally attacked" me for parking in their spot on a public road. Upper Forde Lane is a raceway. Can't you do anything about it before someone is hurt? I live on the other side of the neighborhood, I don't care about that. They have an ugly color of shutters and they need to paint them. Don't you regulate the appearance of homes? I don't live in a town house. Why am I paying for the town houses to be plowed? Why is my shared driveway not plowed? People are parking too close to my driveway. These kids keep cutting through our yard. Their dog is defecating on my property. You don't have any activates for youth, teens, adults. We are having this or that issue with the neighbor and we want the HOA to fix it. Oh, we don't talk to our neighbors because we don't get along. We want you the HOA to tell them "they need to stop whatever it is they are doing because I am right and they are wrong." I could go on but I think you all get the idea.

Facts:

1. Upper Forde Lane is a public street. Anyone can park a vehicle on the street according to the town ordinances. If you have an issue with a car parked on Upper Forde Lane, you need to call the town to file a complaint. We do ask that all homeowners be considerate and park in their driveway or parking bays. Also, if you have 3-4 cars per household, it would be advantageous for you to double park in your own driveway, whenever possible.
2. All home colors and styles including the brick, stone and various porches, were selected by the builder who had an architect design the fronts of the various homes to be aesthetically pleasing. Colors may fade overtime and maintenance such as repainting of the original colors of doors and shutters do not require HOA approval. Changes of the color of shutters or doors or addition/change of a storm door or light fixtures do require HOA approval, be it a single family or townhouse. The HOA has posted on the website, the original colors of paint from the builders documents for your convenience.
3. The roads located between and behind the townhouses are not merely for the convenience of the townhouse owners but per Article 2 Section A of the by-laws : "Every owner will have the right and easement of enjoyment in and to the Common Areas which shall be apportioned to and shall pass with the title of every lot." These roads were installed by the builder so all persons can enjoy the open area without encumbrances or trespassing on others property to access the area. As part of the title of ownership of your home, each of us has a piece of the common area and is therefore responsible to maintain and improve the common areas. When we signed on that "dotted line", we agreed to take responsibility for those common areas. Often the "For Sale" listing include pictures of the common area as a neighborhood benefit, Tot-Lot and Pavilion area.
4. The parking bay areas directly behind each of the townhouses (parking bays facing the backs of the townhouses) are the responsibility of each townhouse owner as you own those particular parking bays. It is up to the townhouse owner to remove any snow from their particular parking bays. The HOA does not maintain these areas.
5. The parking bays facing the railroad tracks and those at the pavilion are considered common area and are maintained by the HOA.
6. Shared Driveways or Use –in –Common Drives per Article 2 Section 7: "The maintenance responsibility of the use-in –common driveways shall be governed by Declarations of Maintenance Obligation to be recorded among the Land Record of Carroll County and will not be the responsibility of the Association." These areas are a shared responsibility and are conveyed via tax records to the homeowners that reside on the drive. These are drives, not streets, and there is no easement of access. As long as a vehicle is not blocking the drive they can legally park up to it's edge per curb markings.
7. Neighbor disputes. We the HOA do not get involved. You need to work it out yourselves.

The truth is, everyone thinks that the HOA rules are for others and that they do not apply to themselves, thinking that they have these circumstances that should allow them to do what they want to do.

The HOA cannot regulate good manners or neighborly behavior. The HOA Architectural Committee does not do random surveys of the neighborhood but does respond to Residents' complaints.

It is not possible to go back in time and change what has occurred, but in the future if there were to be another issue we ask that you email the North Carroll Farms g-mail account as it is monitored frequently to let us know you concerns.



August 4th

Where:

North Carroll Farms Pavilion

1856-1868 Upper Forde Lane

6:30 pm-9:00pm

Community Cookout & Music

(Hot Dogs, Drinks and Cake provided)



Explore a Fire Truck



Be Involved in
Your Community

Inflatable
Obstacle
Course

Face Painting

Meet McGruff



MEET YOUR
NORTH CARROLL FARMS
2015-2016

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Ray Baker

VICE PRESIDENT

Doug Torgeson

TREASURER

Cathy Hlubb

SECRETARY

Matt Muller

ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE CHAIR

Bruce Steger

LAND USE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dan Schiller

SOCIAL COMMITTEE CHAIR

Ted McCrobie

Like to walk?

Walk Carroll is a long-term walking and exercise program designed to inspire anyone who lives, works, or plays in Carroll County to engage in regular physical activity. To participate, simply track your physical activity and try to reach the CDC-recommended goal of 150 minutes or more each week. With *Walk Carroll*, you can enjoy *free* group walking events all over Carroll County. <http://www.healthycarroll.org/prevention-intervention/walk-carroll/>



North Carroll - Walks alternate between Leister Park and Cape Horn Park, 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Please contact the project coordinator to confirm the exact times and locations of walks – these may vary.

Victoria Barry, 410-871-7648, VBarry@CarrollHospitalCenter.org

Local club information and sign-up sheets can also be found at most CCPL library branches. There is no fee to join a walking club. You can also contact one of our neighbors, Cathy Mitzel (dcmitzel@comcast.net) who is part of the “North Carroll” group.



As you are planning your Summer and Fall projects, please be sure to submit your Architectural Request Form and receive approval prior to starting your projects.



PLAYGROUND CLEANUP

April 4th, 2015



A big shout out to our volunteers who

- * Raked and prepared playground for woodchips
- * Spread 35 yds. of woodchips in 2 1/2 hours
- * Installed all new swings
- * Cleaned up the Rain Garden at the playground
- * Installed grills at the Pavilion

Ray Baker

Teddy Brown

Matt Muller

Thomas Betlow

Dave Jackson

Doug Torgeson

Kevin Brown

Brandon Kirby

Ron Williams

Kim Brown

Jason Kirby

Piper Brown

Robert Kirby

Thank you!



Eagle Scout Service Project on the basketball court in North Carroll Farms is complete!

- * Lines and arches on the court including 2 new 3 point arches re-painted
- * Backboards and rims re-painted
- * Nets replaced
- * Two new 6 foot benches installed

Nathaniel Jackson

Troop 380

Aspiring Eagle Scout

Please send Thank You letters or Emails to the NCF HOA and we will forward them to Nathaniel to help with his Eagle Scout Project.



Check out our website for the most up to date news, calendar of events, contact information for board members and other important things you want to know.