

# North Carroll Farms HOA Community Newsletter

September 2019

Greetings Neighbors,

We had a visit from Chief of Police David Snyder at our last HOA meeting, on August 5, 2019. The data from the speed monitor on Farm Woods Lane has been collected. 85% of people are driving at or below 32 mph, and of that 85%, 50% are driving 26 mph or less. It was on for 20 days, from July 4-24, 2019. There were 25,000 cars that drove by in that time, for a daily average of 1,400. The highest speeds were recorded between 11 AM and 2 PM. He reminded us that these are summer trends. The Hampstead Police also has a less visible sign they plan to use in our community in the future, on Upper Forde Lane, as per community request. Both streets will continue to have routine devices put on them in order to monitor driving trends, and to make enforcement more efficient.

In the issue of safety, PLEASE ensure that your children are wearing helmets if they are riding bikes and/or skateboards and scooters. If they are 15 or under, it is actually MD state law to wear helmets when riding bicycles. We are working with the police to help enforce the speed limit, but there can be devastating consequences if a non-helmeted rider is hit by a car even going under the speed limit. We are NOT trying to police parenting, we are simply trying to ensure the safety of the children in our community.

Brett Dieck, a lawyer, will be helping us to handle HOA debts that are multiple years past due, at no cost to us. His payments will come out of money he is able to obtain from debtors.

We will be commencing our biannual review of finances with Shaneybrook and Associates, located in Hampstead, who has also done our previous reviews.

While we now have the assistance of Cascade Property Management, the HOA board is still the final say in all community business. If you would like to have your voice heard, please come to our next board meeting on November 4, 2019, at 7 PM at the senior center. We are looking for two new board members and would love to have you join. Now that we have active management, we have no need for monthly board meetings, so we plan to have 4 meetings a year, unless it seems necessary to add more: February (snow date March), May (the annual meeting), August, and November. All meetings are public, and while we talk about items in meetings and newsletters, you will be able to bring your thoughts to the most up-to-the minute items on our agenda.

Cascade Property Management will conduct an annual inspection, to help to keep our community sparkling. It is ongoing now. If you have received a letter in the mail, please take care of the issue, and if it seems like too tight a deadline for you to do so, please call Shannon to acknowledge the letter, and you will get an extension. For example, if you received a notice about cleaning your siding and needing it to be complete by August, and you had planned time and budgeted for it to be done in September, please call Shannon and make her aware. Please communicate with us and Shannon, and we can work with you! In that same spirit, we have heard your concerns/comments from the last HOA meeting, and we are actively working on ways to improve communication regarding HOA and

management notices. We are your neighbors, and just like you, we are kind people, trying to be good neighbors. Keep this in mind when speaking to us about issues.

Cascade will help us with day-to-day issues. They are the people to call if you notice repeated parking offenses (lawn parking, etc.), neglect of property maintenance, or any other issues you may have. We pay them \$420/month to handle all complaints, do the yearly inspection and follow-up, obtain multiple quotes for our lawn contracts, plowing contracts, playground mulch, and tree removal, and do all of our invoicing. In other words, they make it easier to volunteer on the board now, as it no longer takes quite as many hours out of the year. We are one of the last communities in Hampstead to have active management. We were able to fit this in the budget by turning over the storm water management areas to the town in April, which reduced our mowing costs.

We have also included a dead tree limb line in our mowing budget, to have a yearly tree inspection and trimming of dead limbs hanging over property lines. A few of our neighbors have had issues with trees, when they live next to a green space owned by the HOA. By including this as a line item, we will hopefully avoid costly removal of dead trees, as after a bad storm we have had tree removal costs that throw off our planned budget. As requested by homeowners along those areas, we added in the yearly monitoring. We cannot remove all dead trees from these areas, as it would be an insane bill, but we look at if the tree will cause damage to property if it falls. Small dead trees are also a valuable part of the ecosystem to birds such as the woodpecker.

If you see ATV use, kids vandalizing the pavilion area, or kids 16 or under riding without helmets, this is a police issue, so call them, not Cascade. Neighbors who use their lawn for parking are violating HOA by-laws and the town code. The HOA letter you may have received about parking was a courtesy. Your next notice could be a ticket from the Town of Hampstead.

The Fall Yard Sale is Sept. 14, tentatively from 8AM to noon. Please let us know by Sept. 11 if you are participating.

Bulk Yard Waste Pickup by the town will be done on Oct 19, so put your items out in the evening on Oct 18. At the last meeting, neighbors were complaining about people driving through and making a mess. This is a town event, and these are public streets, so unfortunately, there is nothing we can do about it.

Volunteer Hours are available for cleaning signs and pulling playground weeds. Please contact us if you would like to earn them and help the community out.

The rain gardens were given several years to help mitigate the flood waters for the playground, and unfortunately, despite best efforts, they are not working. Despite a few years of replanting, it is tough to get plants besides crabgrass to grow in there. The areas will be smoothed out this fall and reseeded with grass. Volunteer hours for helping with that are available as well.

The volleyball net will be replaced with a higher quality net. We have ordered new letters for our welcome signs, as the old ones are falling apart. We are also looking for solar sign illumination lights for the signs, so they are visible after dark, but not so bright that they disturb area homeowners. If someone knows of a products like this, please contact us.

As a reminder, the final \$150.00 paving assessment is due now! Late fees will be assessed after October 1.

If you live on a shared private driveway, please start talking with your neighbors about paving next summer. We hope to pave behind the townhomes in the next 1-2 years, and will be obtaining quotes again (the paving assessments are based on what we are projected to need, based on 3 quotes obtained a few years ago). If you are a townhome owner, your spots will be paved during the project, and you will receive an additional paving assessment. If you live on a shared, private driveway, it is highly advisable to save for paving for next summer, as we hope to get a good discount for you in adding additional driveways, vs. doing this as a separate job down the line. If you also hope to fix up your personal asphalt driveway, this will also be a great time to do that. Factors that will influence paving project timing: weather, cost as we obtain new quotes (as asphalt prices vary with oil prices), and general condition of the road behind the townhouses. We hope to fix some of the drainage issues in the overflow parking and in the playground at the same time.

We hope to see you at the next HOA Board Meeting on Nov 4!

Sincerely,

The NCF HOA Board