

Newington Forest Community Association, Inc.

Calendar Year 2021 President's Report

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Newington Forest Community Association!

We are required by the Governing Documents and State law to hold an annual meeting of the members of the Association. That is what we are doing tonight and we thank you for being here.

Since our Association was founded more than 40 years ago our community has been served by dedicated **volunteers** who serve on the Board of Directors. The time and dedication these individuals have given to our community over the years is immeasurable and, on behalf of the entire community, I offer my sincere thanks to each of them. Several members of the current Board have served the community for many, many years.

At this time, I would like to recognize the other six current members of the Board for their service to our community:

Vice President – Charlie Wood

Treasurer – Robert Cooper

Secretary – Kenneth Frye

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer – Clayton Vieg

Board Members – Zaynabb Imran and Diane Rea

I'd also like to recognize Dana Neese-Paxton who has served as our Community Manager for 9 years. The last couple of years have presented never-before-seen challenges, and our community is fortunate to be led by Dana's experience and enthusiasm.

I also want to recognize the other members of the Association's staff:

Wanda Walsh - Assistant Community Manager

Marlith Oporto-Rossy - Covenants Inspector

Barbara Head - Administrative Assistant

Don Becht - Handyman

Nicole Renzo & Patrick Eckenrode - Grounds Maintenance

Our Association Staff work hard day-to-day to keep Newington Forest running. From answering residents' questions to negotiating contracts to keeping the grounds safe, we

all owe our thanks to the Association Staff. If you encounter them - whether it be in person, on the phone or via email - please take a moment to thank them for all they do for the community.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present you with the following report on the Board's activities since our annual meeting a year ago. I want to take this opportunity to discuss some issues affecting our community and what the Board has done to address them, as well as some of the Association's accomplishments this last year. The pandemic has continued to present challenges to the Board and Association staff, but I am pleased to report that we have pivoted to address those challenges.

Coronavirus Pandemic Response: In the second year of the pandemic, the office remained open by appointment only with a secure drop box accessible 24/7 to receive Association-related correspondence (payment, Architectural Review Committee (ARC) applications, etc.). The drop box is to the left of the office entrance and is labeled "drop box". Board and ARC meetings were held via Zoom.

Reopened Pool/Swim Team: You may recall last winter and spring guidelines around the pandemic were very fluid and seemed to be changing weekly, if not daily. The Community Manager had numerous meetings with the pool management company and attorney to discuss reopening the pool and the return of the swim team. The Board sent a survey to homeowners to get their thoughts on reopening the pool. After considering the survey results and getting guidance from the Pool Committee, Association attorney and pool management company, the Board held two town halls to update the Community on pool reopening and return of the swim team. To streamline the process and minimize contact, we switched to an online pool registration and check-in system. The Board authorized the purchase of new pool furniture in an ongoing effort to replace old/broken furniture.

Community Center: The Community Center remains closed for rental but be assured the Board and Community Manager are closely monitoring current pandemic numbers and CDC recommendations. Improvements have been made at the Community Center over this year including the installation of lighting and security cameras in the parking lot, replacing the handrail on the front steps, and signing a contract for regular cleaning of the Community Center (taking a task off of the Office Staff). The Board is researching the purchase of an electronic sign to be placed outside the Community Center. This would be used for important messaging and could also be used for personal messages/greetings, i.e., happy birthday, graduation, happy anniversary, etc.

Annual Inspection Process: The Association conducted annual street-by-street property maintenance inspections in an effort to uphold property values within the

community. Our community is made up of 1808 homes. Of those homeowners who received a letter about maintenance issues, the vast majority responded favorably and addressed the concerns. When necessary, the Board and Staff worked with homeowners to facilitate plans of action.

Board Hearings and Board Appeals: Hearings were held for properties that were cited for maintenance issues and the homeowner did not submit a correction plan. Over the past year the Board considered two appeals of Applications that were denied by the ARC. The first was for a partially screened-in porch on the front of a single-family home. The Board denied the appeal because the request was not consistent with the aesthetics of the rest of the community. The second was for a change in siding material type and color for homes on Hill Stream and Cliff Rock Courts. The Community rules limited the type of siding permitted on these streets to wood. By a unanimous vote, the Board voted to allow Hill Stream and Cliff Rock Courts to install the same types and colors of siding permitted in other parts of Newington Forest.

Delinquencies: While most residents pay their HOA dues timely, we do have property owners with past due balances. The Assistant Community Manager closely monitors delinquencies and tries to get in touch with property owners to make payments and/or establish a payment plan. By successfully obtaining payments or setting up a payment arrangement, we avoid adding attorneys fees to the past due balance.

Erosion: There are several areas around the Community with erosion issues that require attention. The Board prioritized the projects and determined which could be resolved by the handyman or grounds contractor and which needed the opinion of an engineer. An engineer was selected (Becht) to provide recommendations on eight areas around the Community. After reviewing the engineer's recommendations the Board asked Becht to provide drawings for three areas. The other five areas can be addressed by contractors or the Association handyman. The Board is actively working with the engineer on the three areas they are addressing.

Reviewed/Approved 2022 Budget: The Board had several budget discussions and on August 24 Board members conducted a line-by-line review of the 2022 budget. I cannot emphasize enough how hard the Finance Committee and the Board work to keep costs (and consequently your quarterly dues) as low as possible. I'm pleased to report that, in spite of significant unavoidable contractual increases, the increases to quarterly dues were minimal:

Townhomes = 3.49%
Single-family homes = 3.31%

As I mentioned, the Finance Committee submits a proposed budget for the Board's consideration. If you are interested in serving on the Finance Committee (a time commitment of about 3 hours per week during the months of May through August.), please contact our Community Manager, Dana Neese-Paxton. The Finance Committee will begin work on the 2023 budget soon and welcomes new volunteers.

Legislative Update: At the July 20, 2021 meeting the Board received a legislative update from the Association's legal counsel, Kimberly O'Halloran-Perez. Highlights of Ms. O'Halloran-Perez's update include:

- the annual legal discussion to provide updates on 2020/2021 HOA legislation;
- to provide guidance on operations related to Coronavirus and reopening the amenities; and,
- to provide the Board with a draft resolution to establish virtual meeting and electronic voting procedures.

Around the Community: Annual sidewalk and curb & gutter repairs on townhouse courts. VDOT completed a large asphalt project on the Newington Forest Ave side (school) of the community where single-family home streets were repaved.

Police Activity: The Association enforces the rules as stated in the Governing Documents. Please contact Fairfax County Police if you see any suspicious activity that brings you concern in the community.

Below are some websites and social media platforms used by the Fairfax County Police to update the community:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/district/westspringfield>

<https://nextdoor.com/>

<http://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyPD/>

<https://www.instagram.com/FairfaxCountyPD/>

<https://www.cityprotect.com/>

Contracts: RFPs were issued for audit and tax preparation and financial management. After reviewing the response to the RFPs the Board decided to stay with the same audit and tax prep and financial management companies. The pool management contract will be impacted following the minimum wage increase in 2022. The Board and Community Manager worked with the pool management company to consider ways to

minimize the overall cost to homeowners. We just completed our first year with Advantage as our grounds contractor. The Community Manager, Assistant Community Manager and Board are all pleased with the work on the common areas, as well as their response during the snowfall last month.

Snow and Winter Weather: Speaking of snow... A reminder that VDOT is responsible for clearing and treating all main roads and single-family home roads throughout Newington Forest. The HOA is responsible for common areas (Community Center) and townhome roads. A lot of good snow-related information is available on the Association website: https://newingtonforest.org/?page_id=513.

Hopefully we are done with snow for the season, but a few reminders:

- Do shovel your sidewalks to allow for safe pedestrian traffic.
- Do lend a hand to your neighbors who may not be able to shovel out their own cars and sidewalks or those who live alone and could use a helping hand.
- Do clear a path to your mailbox for the mail carrier.
- Kitty litter works well in areas that need more traction. Rock salt will damage your concrete and the surrounding shrubs and grass.
- Never shovel snow from your sidewalk or parking space/driveway into the middle of the court/street. This action can create walls of snow that can be difficult or impossible for snowplows to move.
- Be considerate of your neighbors and do not park in a space that you did not clear. No one likes to come home to find a space they spent time clearing filled by a neighbor's car.

The Office Staff maintains a list of residents who are available to help with snow shoveling. Please contact the Office if you are available to shovel areas in the community or if you need this information.

Before we leave the topic of snow, I'd like to say a special thank you to Don Becht and the volunteers who assisted him following the snowstorm on January 3rd. Don and residents cleared many downed trees, cleared snow at the Community Center and helped with many cars that were stuck on roads that had not yet been cleared.

Finally, I invite all of our members and residents to become and stay actively engaged in the Association's activities and functions. One way to do this is to attend our regularly-scheduled Board meetings – the third Tuesday of every month, starting at 7 pm. The Board has continued to hold these meetings over Zoom, which means you can join us from the comfort of your living room! At the beginning of every Board meeting

we hold a Homeowners' Forum which is a designated time for owners and residents to bring any issues or concerns to the Board. Of course, this may also be done at any time during the month by calling or sending an email to the Association office (questions@newingtonforest.org). Staff and Board members make up a small percentage of our Community, so we rely on **you** to help make us aware of issues or concerns we may not know about.

I already mentioned the Finance Committee, but we are also looking for volunteers to serve on the Pool Committee and the Social Committee. If you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities, please contact our Community Manager, Dana Neese-Paxton.

Thank you for attending tonight's meeting and we hope to see you at one or more of our Board meetings and other events over the next year.

Tina Ward
President