

COVINGTON WOODS NEWS

Newsletter of the Covington Woods Homeowners Association

August 2013

Officers

President
Nancy Streeter
Secretary
Paul Curtis
Treasurer
Jeffrey Rothman
Ass't. Treasurer
Jeffrey Benson

Board Members

Gregg Anderson
Marie Creighton
Robert LaMorte
Sandy Mason
Cheryl M. Wood
Jitka Zobal-Ratner

Board Committee Chairs

Architectural Review
Robert LaMorte &
Sandy Mason
Archive
Gregg Anderson
Landscape
Jitka Zobal-Ratner
Newsletter & Website
Cheryl M. Wood
Social
Marie Creighton
Welcome & Directory
Nancy Streeter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“Looking back helps to inform the present,” we said in the March newsletter. So a retrospective of the Covington Woods community was started. In this issue, you will read about the years since our genesis through the end of the 20th century. What insights might you glean?

Another analysis which you might find interesting is the turnover of owners since the beginning. The figures cited make no claim for absolute accuracy, but they are fairly close.

About 20.8 % of our current residents moved here originally and stayed. Over the ten- year period from 2002-2012, there was a turnover rate of about 37.5%. That leaves about 41.7% who came in the 1990s and stayed. This speaks highly of the stability of Covington Woods.

As you might surmise, the all town home street saw the highest ten-year turnover of 68%. Other rates include Highgate (41%), Johnston (25%), Walnut (21%), Somerset (13.3%), Covington (11.7%), and Vesper (11%).

These figures point to “looking forward” as well. In order to keep on keeping our community vibrant, we need new people to take active roles in continuing the good work of the many who have given of their time and talents, as Board members, on committees, or just as importantly, showing up at the Annual Meetings. So, this is an invitation to all who haven't served. Please call me or any Board member to find out how. I think you will find it gratifying.

Nancy

PS. Yes, the Board is moving forward on the three goals outlined in the previous newsletter: Archiving HOA records, getting a Website, and proposing a By-Law change regarding delinquent dues.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Architectural Review

By Rob LaMorte & Sandy Mason, Co-Chairs

First, we would like to thank everyone who submitted their Homeowner Request for Approval of Exterior Work form prior to beginning any work requiring such approval. So far this year the Committee has received 15 requests for work to be performed. Please keep sending your requests to the Committee members. A copy of the Request form is enclosed with the Newsletter.

In July, Sandy Mason and I did our annual “ride through” and the homes in Covington Woods have been pretty well maintained. More than 70% of the homes have new siding, trim and roofs (thanks to the hail storm). About 75% of homes have new garage doors. There are about a half dozen of the original doors that need to be replaced. If your garage door need to be replaced, don't forget to submit your request form.

For most homes the landscaping looks great! There are about a half dozen homes that could use some work. Please take a look at your landscaping and keep it maintained.

We still have a few trash cans that remain visible to the street after trash day. If this is you, please move the trash cans into your garage or behind your house.

There are some mailboxes that are showing age. Please take a look at yours and, if needed, replace it.

The town of Guilderland has a leash law on the books and our By Laws are consistent with this law. Remember, not everyone is a pet lover and some folks are uncomfortable around animals. Dogs running loose are not only against the law, but could also be dangerous for both people and the dog. Not everyone wants your dog running on their property. There are many dog friendly parks in the area where folks could let their dog run and play with other dogs. Also, please be considerate and cleanup after your pet.

If you are new to the neighborhood and haven't reviewed the Covenants and Architectural standards, please do. If you need copies please contact anyone on the board.

Thank you and remember, we have no street lights, so keep your lights on.

Any questions or issues contact Rob LaMorte or Sandy Mason.

Landscape Committee

The Board is soliciting bids to remove the dead pine tree in the common area (a/k/a picnic area) on Walnut Lane.

Social Committee

By Marie Creighton, Chair

Another successful neighborhood garage sale was held on June 29, 2013, and it didn't rain. Approximately 20 home owners participated. It is hard to believe, but it is almost time for the Covington Woods Annual Labor Day picnic. Please see the attached flyer with all of the details. We look forward to seeing everyone. If you have any questions, please contact her.

Website Committee

By Cheryl M. Wood, Chair

Progress is being made on getting the Covington Woods Homeowners Association website up and running. The content of the website is still being developed but it will include some information about Covington Woods, as well as the Association's Bylaws, Covenants, Architectural Standards, and Homeowner Request for Approval of Exterior Work form. Currently, we estimate that the website will be up before the Annual Meeting in November.

Welcome & Directory Committee

By Nancy Streeter, Chair

We are pleased to welcome three new residents to Covington Woods. Please give them a warm "Hello" when you meet them.

COVINGTON WOODS: GROWING PAINS (1988-1999)

By Nancy Streeter

The "Forming" of Covington Woods (see the March newsletter) went incredibly well. However, there was still an enormous amount of work to "form a more perfect community" – for our community to become cohesive and functioning.

The peaceful "forming" stage was followed by over a decade of work by many Board members and committees to make this happen. These were the "Norming," and may I add, sometimes "Storming" years when governing documents needed revision, committees started, procedures agreed upon, problems ironed out, and tough decisions made. Let's take a look at some of the milestones.

Governing Documents

- The original *Covenants*, written by the sponsors, had to be amended for the new, independent Homeowners Association. A 1989 attempt to amend them failed to get the needed 2/3 majority approval, but passed in 1990. Still there was some discontent about the *Covenants*, so in 1993 the Board surveyed owners for their

input. The committee went to work again and presented a draft at the 1995 Annual Meeting only to have a motion carried to not vote on the amendments because of the small number in attendance. How disappointing for those who had worked so hard! It took another two years until June, 1997 for the amended *Covenants* to pass.

- After a 1992 attempt, amended *By-Laws* to conform to the *Covenants* were approved at the 1999 Annual Meeting. We still use these two documents to guide our HOA today, sixteen years later.
- To help guide the amendment process and to serve as the Association's counsel, fourteen legal firms were solicited in 1988. Mr. Arthur Pasquerillo was chosen and still works for the Association.

Meetings

Where oh where shall we meet? For the first six or eight years, the Annual Meeting was held at the Farnsworth Middle School. Then the Guilderland Public Library was tried, and then the picnic area, and then back to the library since 1999.

Social Scene Tried, didn't last, still talked about? Christmas caroling and dinner dances. Tried, didn't last? Breakfasts, Buckaroos and Albany Indoor Rock Gym trips, Night at the movies. What lasted? The picnic and Halloween parade since 1989. The garage sale was added in 1997. Note: Twice monies had to be collected to defray costs of the picnic – in 1988 and 1992.

Communications

The *Newsletter* was initiated in 1987 and has been published continuously ever since, with the exception of a couple of years in the early 1990s. Work started on a *Street Directory* in 1988, but wasn't published regularly until 1997. A *Welcome Committee* was also started that year.

Oh! Oh! Problems

- As early as 1989 the problem of late dues arose. So, a late fee had to be imposed, and in 1991 the first liens were filed. To clarify procedures for residents, a four-step collection process was started.
- Residents were up in arms back in 1989 when the Town wanted to extend Dr. Shaw Road through Covington Woods – the Southern By-Pass. The plan was finally dropped, much to everyone's relief.
- In 1997, an old farm well, considered dangerous, was found near the picnic area. The HOA paid to cap it.
- Believe it! These other problems have been with us from the start: dead plants in the cul-de-sacs for lack of water, dog "do-do," unauthorized vehicles on lawns or driveways – exterior lights not lit at night – stolen street and No Trespassing signs – cars speeding through the streets – hunters, bears, and ATVs in the "forever wild" land behind homes.

So, by the end of the 1990s, despite some recurring problems, Covington Woods was considered a friendly, desirable place to live. But were other problems possibly brewing? Next time, folks!