

COVINGTON WOODS NEWS

Newsletter of the Covington Woods Homeowners Association

March 2013

Officers

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let me begin this year as your new president by acknowledging all of the past presidents of our Homeowners Association, and their fellow board members, who worked on behalf of Covington Woods residents throughout the years since our incorporation in 1985. We owe them a debt of gratitude for their dedication, caring, and giving of countless hours of "free" labor to build and keep this a vibrant and wonderful place to live. I humbly walk in their footsteps. Later in this issue, and in the next few issues, we will highlight the history and milestones of our community.

Looking back helps to inform the present, but we must look forward as well. So, for 2013, the Board will focus on the following:

- Website – Development of a Covington Woods website will again be pursued. The original website, proposed in 2007, was only available for a couple of years with limited information.
- Archives – Records of the Association – primarily paper, have been handed down to each succeeding board in folders and boxes. Having them digitized will make for better preservation.
- Delinquent Dues: Remedies will be sought to address this perennial problem. While this issue pertains to only a small minority of homeowners, it takes an inordinate amount of Board time to pursue collections.

I am also happy to report that we have been able to economize on operating costs by publishing the *Directory* every other year and by delivering the newsletter via email to those who took this option. You will see other economies in the committee reports as well. This has allowed us to keep the dues the same for seven straight years!

Nancy

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Architectural Review

By Rob LaMorte & Sandy Mason, Co-Chairs

Sandy Mason has returned to serve on the Board of Directors, and to co-chair the Architectural Review Committee. She is a great addition to the team.

One responsibility of the Architectural Review Committee is to handle violations of the *Architectural Standards and Guidelines* based on the *Covenants, Easements, and Restrictions*. It is also every home owner's responsibility to help us by letting the Committee know of violations. The general rule of thumb is, "If you see something, say something." All calls and/or emails are kept in strictest confidence.

At the November 2012 Annual Meeting, it was brought to the Board's attention that some folks repeatedly leave garbage cans in front of their garages in plain view of the street. The *Standards* specifically forbid this unsightly practice. The problem was immediately addressed with the home owners involved and appears to have been corrected.

Sometime in the spring, Sandy and I will re-establish the "ride through the neighborhood," insuring that all homes are in compliance with the *Standards*. One area needing attention, as brought out at the Annual Meeting, will be on the maintenance of landscaping, especially weeding of planting beds. Please also check for trees and shrubs that did not survive the winter and have them removed.

A second Committee responsibility is to consider requests for changes of any sort to the exterior of your home or property. All requests must be made in writing to the Architectural Review Committee. Approval is required prior to the start of work (see page 3 of the *Standards*).

The Architectural Review Committee received only one request during the 2012-2013 winter season. After reviewing the contractor's plans, the request was approved.

Please remember that the *Covenants* and *Standards* were established to keep our neighborhood clean, neat, and manicured, which in turn, keeps property values high.

Any questions or issues contact Rob LaMorte (456-4800) or Sandy Mason 452-0606).

Archive

By Gregg Anderson, Chair

The Covington Woods Homeowners Board has been discussing the need to safeguard some of the important board records. Currently most records are in paper form and are not formally copied and/or stored. Which records need to be safe guarded and how far back in time to go still needs to be determined. Some research has been done to consider options for electronically copying and storing the records. Additional research will be done in the next few months and a recommendation will be made to the board. If anyone has any suggestions as to the best way to address this issue please e-mail me at gregg748@yahoo.com.

Landscape Committee

By Jitka Zobal-Ratner, Chair

We have again contracted with Capital District Landscape, LLC to cut the grass in the common areas on a weekly basis, mulch the cul-de-sacs and entrances this spring, weed monthly, trim twice, as necessary, during the growing season and provide spring and fall clean-up. They will be providing these services from April 1 through November 30. The price for these services will be the same as last year, without any increase in the cost to the Homeowners Association.

Social Committee

By Marie Creighton, Chair

As the warm weather approaches and you begin your spring cleaning, please remember to put aside any items you would like to sell at the annual Covington Woods garage sale in June – held rain or shine. Items that typically sell very well are toys, furniture, records, books, and household items.

The sale will be advertised in the print and online in the *Albany Times Union*. Flyers and neighborhood signs will be out with the date. Everyone is invited to participate. If you have any questions, please call me at 466-6418.

A FEW REMINDERS

Parking

Please ask contractors and visitors not to park:

- Directly across from driveways as this makes it difficult for owners to back out.
- In front of mail boxes so the carrier can reach the box for delivery.

Contractor Signs

The Association allows placing of contractor signs for a maximum of two days. All signs in violation will be removed immediately.

Dog Owners

The Town of Guilderland reminds us not to put dog droppings in yard waste bags, and that it is unlawful to deposit dog droppings on sewer grates. So, remember to bring your “pooper-scooper” or plastic bags to clean up after your pet.

Treasurer’s Report

By Jeffrey Rothman

Thank you to everyone who paid their annual dues by January 31st. You make our work easier!

However, several homeowners needed a second or third notice. This creates extra time and cost for the Board and the Association. So, remember for next year, “paid on time, saves cost and time.”

Please remember when selling your house that a statement from the Association is needed at the closing to show that a seller is current with all financial obligations to the Association. To avoid any delays, please contact me, the Association treasurer, at least two weeks before the closing, so paperwork can be completed on a timely basis.

Welcome Committee

By Nancy Streeter, Chair

We give a warm welcome to the ten new residents who moved to Covington Woods since the *Directory* was last published in 2011.

THE GENESIS OF COVINGTON WOODS

By Nancy Streeter

A SALUTE TO PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE COVINGTON WOODS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION	
1986-1987	Rex S. Ruthman
1988-1990	Alan J. Domaracki
1991	Allan Shapiro
1991-1992	Chris Brassard
1992-1994	Anne Ryan
1995-1996	Jeanne Millet
1997-1999	Ellen Engels
2000	Part-Year Vacancy
2000-2001	Robert Kraushaar
2002	Vacancy
2003-2004	Jan Brown
2005-2006	Leslie Feinman
2007	Part-Year Vacancy
2007-2010	Jerold Nadel
2011-2012	Robert Kraushaar

In the beginning, there was R.S.R General Partnership, the “sponsor,” who purchased land in 1985 off Johnston Road in the Town of Guilderland from the Krausse and Lockrow families with the intention to develop a Subdivision of single-family homes and townhouses. The property was incorporated and named “Covington Woods.”

The sponsor next developed a set of *By-Laws* for the new Association and attached them to the *Declaration of Covenants, Easements, and Restrictions* filed in the Albany County Clerk’s Office on August 29, 1985. Six R.S.R attorneys – Counselors J. Rosen, J. Rosen, W. Shultz, E. Feinberg, C. Dumas, and R. Ruthman made up the first Board of Directors. Mr. Ruthman served as the first President.

The sponsors, adhering to the zoning laws of the Town of Guilderland, set aside 105 acres of open space land (Common Grounds), later deeded to the Homeowners Association, for the enjoyment and use of property owners. Lots were then put up for sale and homes started to be built. By November 1987, 135 lots had been sold - a huge success!

According to the *By-Laws*, as soon as seven lots were sold, a special meeting was to be called to elect one of the homeowners to replace one of the sponsors. After the fourteenth home was sold a similar process was to take place. As it happened, Ray Marian and Dr. Kevin Roberts were the first two owners elected to serve on the Board. By 1988, the Association was fully independent. Elected were owners Linda Barr-Gale, Chris Brassard, Ray Marian, Bob Williams, Michele Zedek and Alan Domaracki, who was chosen President.

The Association was off to a fine start, but why did they need to meet over twenty times in the first year? What needed to be done to keep the community going? What problems did they encounter?

Next time, folks!