

Montpelier Woods Homeowners Association

Winter
Newsletter
January 2015

MWHOHA Board of Directors:

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Treasurer	Paula Oas
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Member at Large	Teresa Krikor

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From the woodpile...President's Article



HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME 2015.

This year's election kept the same board intact so with that being said, I would like to thank the members of the Board for their service to our community. Sometimes daily life is not an easy thing to endure. I truly hope that if you are a New Year resolution maker that you make wise choices and can stick to them. If you are living life daily like I do let's hope that this year brings us much good fortune and happiness. I am a true believer that life is what we make it and I am going to make this one the best year yet.

WINTER is here full steam ahead. Hopefully we have all prepared for these harsh times. Staying well stocked on items that can be used in case of a power outage is always wise. Canned food, water, and toilet paper are always some of the first things that disappear from the grocery shelves when bad weather is called for, and these are the very things that can be stored for a period of time. Snow shovels and rock salt will also come in handy when that blizzard sneaks up on us! Don't forget the flashlights and fresh batteries.

Driving in Snow and Ice

The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. Don't go out until the snow plows and sanding trucks have had a chance to do their work, and allow yourself extra time to reach your destination. If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared, and that you know how to handle road conditions. It's helpful to practice winter driving techniques in a snowy, open parking lot, so you're familiar with how your car handles. Consult your owner's manual for tips specific to your vehicle.

Driving safely on icy roads

1. Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
2. Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
3. Turn on your lights to increase your visibility to other motorists.
4. Keep your lights and windshield clean.
5. Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills.
6. Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
7. Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
8. Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.
9. Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

Have you been to our website lately?

There is information there that can be very useful, e.g. frequently called numbers for County offices, association meeting dates, our Newsletters (in color), Police Tips for safe winter driving, back to school safety tips, and lots more. If there is something that you would like to see on the website, please let us know; we can be reached at 240-554-2438.

~Donna Harding

TREE PLANTING

Is your yard too wet? Several people in the association have complained about water drainage or surface water. The MWHOA Board researched and listened to suggestions regarding trees to plant. As several people also complained about deer nibbling on trees, especially Arborvitae, the Board decided to purchase "Bald Cypress" for homeowners to help alleviate the problem.

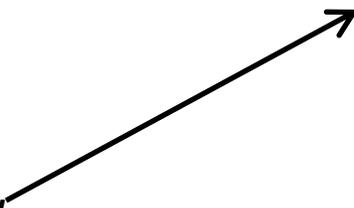
The Bald Cypress is a large tree, reaching 75 to 90 feet. It is a stately and distinctive tree with sage-colored leaves in summer turning pumpkin-colored later on. The bark is gray-brown to red-brown. It is deciduous, losing its leaves in the winter months, hence the name 'bald.' Though it's native to swampy conditions, the bald cypress is also able to withstand dry, sunny weather and is hardy in this area.

Average size of Bald Cypress seedlings are 30 inches and they can endure partial shading, but require overhead light for good growth. Control of competing vegetation may be necessary for a year or more for maximum growth. When planted in a residential yard and weeded and watered, they averaged 12 feet tall three years later.

As the seeds usually fail to germinate on better drained soils because of the lack of surface water it is seldom self-propagating when the soil is not saturated for a period of up to three months after seedfall which is required for germination.

We have contacted the Arbor Day Foundation and they would supply the trees at a reasonable cost. We would like to know who is interested in planting these conifer trees on their property or in the common area adjacent to their property. This would help beautify the property, assist in creating windscreens for the neighborhood, and assist owners in regaining some of the privacy that has been lost due to thinning woods. As the soil in our association area is not easy to dig, the board has decided to rent equipment to assist homeowners in preparing for trees to be planted.

ATTENTION



MVA NOTICES

The Maryland Vehicle Administration (MVA) has started using email rather than snail mail for its first contact with customers. If, for example, you have purchased stickers from their web site in the past, they will use the address you used during your most recent electronic transaction. So, if you receive email from the MVA telling you that your stickers are due, or your vehicle needs emissions inspection etc., this is legitimate email and not a phishing attempt.

THINKING OF SELLING YOUR HOME?

All homeowners in the subdivision are required to give their buyers a full copy of the Covenants and Bylaws and the Architectural Guidelines **BEFORE** any offer to purchase becomes valid. Please discuss this matter with your Real Estate Agent. If you are selling on your own then you as the seller must pick up the "Resale Package." It is available from the HOA Member at Large (currently Teresa Krikor). The cost of this package is \$15.00 and will now be collected by the Settlement Company at closing. The package will also contain a Financial Sheet showing any monies currently owed to the HOA as well as the fee for the package. Any money currently owing will be deducted from the proceeds at closing and forwarded to the MWHOA. The package will contain 3 copies of this Financial Sheet: one for the buyer, one for the seller, and one for the Settlement Company.

SPECIAL SPEAKER AT JANUARY MEETING

Patricia Valentine - an Arborist and the Right Tree, Right Place Program Coordinator - will be attending our January 26th MWHOA meeting to discuss the replacement of the Bradford Pear tree in our development. Our Bradford Pear trees are more than 30 years old, and their structural defects are resulting in falling limbs and damage to cars and other property. The Department of Public Works & Transportation program replaces high risk, dead and dying street trees with new trees. As Montpelier Woods has hundreds of Bradford Pear trees, we are considered a high need community. Please attend our HOA meeting to hear the plans for replacing our trees.
Light refreshments and coffee will be served.

MWHOA Financial Update



Balance Sheet

As of 11/30/2014

Assets

Bank, Savings & Investment Accounts

Checking – Bank of America	\$ 2,609.89
Savings – Bank of America	\$ 5,109.45
Money Market - E-Trade	\$ 5,577.57
CD - Risk Free - Bank of America	\$ 19,385.35
CD - Reg. - Bank of America	\$ 31,040.28

Total Assets **\$ 63,722.54**

Liabilities and Owners Equity

Prepaid Owner Assessments	\$ 56.00
Owners Equity	\$ 63,666.54

Total Liabilities and Owners Equity **\$ 63,722.54**

In 2014, it is estimated that we spent \$4000 more than our income, and \$4000 more than we budgeted for. This \$4000 in overspending is entirely due to kudzu removal. As mentioned in the fall newsletter, we discovered kudzu in the neighborhood that we had to have removed, and this expense came to \$4,740 in 2014. As you can see in the 2015 budget to the right, we have budgeted somewhat less than that amount for the coming year. The major excavation of the kudzu should be over.

We still have not completed the survey of the common areas that we've put in the budget for the last two years, so that is included again for 2015.

We have hired new lawyers, and expect to put on liens (for very delinquent homeowners) where they have been postponed in the past. This will increase our legal expense in 2015, and possibly into the future. The new lawyers will also help us rewrite our legal documents so they can be brought into the 21st century!

Our assessment for 2015 is \$60. This is an increase of \$2 over last year. Soon you should receive an invoice in the mail, if you have not received it already. Please look closely at the amount you owe in the bottom right corner of the invoice. Some of you owe somewhat more or less than \$60. It is very helpful to me if you pay exactly what you owe, so that your account balance will be zero.

Note: If any of you feel like cutting off the stamp that comes to you with your invoice, and mailing it back in the envelope with your payment, the charity I give them to would really appreciate it. (Cut around the stamp; don't cut the stamp!)

I hope you all have a great year!

~Paula Vas



Welcome to our New Neighbors

Thank you for joining us in Montpelier Woods!

Amina Akinduro	10306 Balsamwood Drive
Lawrence and Hope Smith	10212 Snowden
Thomas Carlin	10211 Snowden
Jean Epee	10403 Balsamwood Drive

MWHOA Budget 2015

Receipts

Household Assessments	\$ 20,880
Late Fee Income	\$ 660
Resale Packages	\$ 195
Interest Received	\$ 50
Other	\$ 100

Total Receipts **\$ 21,885**

Expenses

Web Site	\$ 120
Printing	\$ 900
Postage & Mailing	\$ 1,100
Grounds Maintenance	\$ 3,600
Tree Cutting	\$ 10,000
Kudzu Removal	\$ 3,000
Beautification	\$ 200
Insurance	\$ 1,810
Telephone	\$ 165
Office Supplies	\$ 100
Taxes	\$ 560
Legal Fees	\$ 6,000
Bank Fees & Charges	\$ 0
Community Function	\$ 200
Meeting Room Rental	\$ 540
Post Office Box	\$ 192
Other	\$ 500

Total Operating Expenses **\$ 28,987**

Net Operating Inc. (Loss) **\$ (7,102)**

Survey Common Areas \$ 16,246

Net Income (Loss) **\$ (23,348)**



TERRI SHIPP

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Montpelier Woods

Homeowners Association, Inc.

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Laurel, MD. 20709

NEXT MWHOA MEETING DATE



***Deerfield Run Community Center
13000 Laurel Bowie Road***

Monday, 26 January 2015

Meetings begin at 7:00 pm

Future meeting dates:

Feb 23 and Mar 23

Homeowners are encouraged to attend!