

HILLCREST HAPPENINGS

Tidbits of information about Hillcrest Cluster

January 2019

The Hillcrest Cluster Association Annual Meeting

The Hillcrest Cluster Association (HCA) Annual Meeting was conducted on December 11, 2018 in the Forest Edge School cafeteria. Approximately 50 residents attended the meeting, and as always, we thank you for attending and providing comments about the operation of the cluster.

Among other topics discussed at the meeting, the HCA Board informed residents that our 2018 community survey results indicated a large preference for reserved parking. The Board presented information on a process we are exploring--with the guidance of our Cluster attorney--for providing one reserved parking space per townhouse. The Board will be conducting a series of meetings for interested residents in the February-April timeframe. Look for further information.

Your Board of Directors includes: Laura Sharon – President; Rick Stevens – Vice President; Nathan Hagan – Treasurer; Ben Miller – Secretary; and Directors Chris Topoleski, Ramon Bonzon, and Zainab Zaki.

Snow Preparedness

We managed through our first snow pretty well this month. We have renewed our contract with Blade Runners who will be providing snow treatment and plowing services, with new equipment (i.e., a box plow) for heavy storms. The box plow will allow Blade Runners to remove snow closer to parked cars thereby reducing the amount of digging out.

A couple to snow reminders: 1) you can only reserve a shoveled out parking space if you cleared it and the HCA Board declares a snow emergency as defined in the HCA handbook; 2) you are responsible for clearing the sidewalk in front of you house to make it easier for your neighbors and the mailman to get around.

Trash and Recycling

As you are very aware, the Cluster has had significant problems with our trash and recycling pick-up. Our contractor CSI was purchased by ESI and within a few months of ESI taking over the contract, they were bought by Waste Management. We thought this was good because WM is a nationwide trash hauler. Surprise to us, the transition was unprofessional, and WM really didn't want to do residential service. When we finally got the attention of the account representative (by sending a letter to the CEO), they reiterated this displeasure with providing residential service

by giving us an estimate twice what we are paying if we retained their service after the current contract expires in May 2019. The Board decided against that option and put out a request for proposal from other local trash companies. Then on December 21, 2018, the HCA was informed by WM that they sold our contract to Bates Trucking – a trash hauler in Prince Georges County, MD. Needless to say, this has been a dismal failure. The Board has filed complaints with the Fairfax County Office Waste Management, and they are following up with WM and Bates.

In the meantime, the Board has received and evaluated proposals from three contractors and has entered negotiations with one of the contractors. Since there is a 30 day cancellation clause in our current contract, we anticipate having a new contractor on board and collecting trash and recycling sometime in March, 2019.

A few hints about trash and recycling collection: 1) the HCA requires that trash and refuse be placed in a covered contained. Plastic bags are easily opened by birds and animals and create a mess in the neighborhood; 2) recycling of plastics, metal cans, newspapers and cardboard should be placed plastic trash bags and put in recycling bins. Often times high winds blow loose recyclables all over the cluster creating a mess; 3) don't placed bulk items at the curb without first calling our contractor and securing a date for pick-up.

Cluster Dues Assessment

Cluster Dues Invoices for 2019 dues assessments were mailed to all homeowners in December. Dues are \$1320.00 –no increase over the 2018 dues assessment. If you pay your dues in full by February 28, 2019 dues are \$1,265.00. The amount is \$1320.00 if paid between March 1 and June 30, 2019. After July 1, 2019 there is a 1.5% interest charge on all outstanding balances. Without prompt payment of dues, it is not possible to pay contractors and to implement projects contained in the budget.

Sidewalks and Road Repairs

Repairs to sidewalks and curb & gutter, as well as milling and repaving will occur in the Fairfield section of the cluster this spring. Additional information will be made available to residents as soon as it becomes available.

This is the fifth phase of a six phase project to repaving the entire cluster and to repair damaged sidewalks and curbs. The last phase of the work, main Saffold Way from Ring Road to the 4-way Stop and the last cul-de-sac on the exit side, will be completed in 2020. Repaving is not anticipated for another 20 years, 2040, though minor repairs that may be required.

Uh-Ohs

There continues to be a number of folks who do not come to a full stop at STOP signs, and who fail to observe the posted speed limit of 15mph. You know who you are and the HCA requests you follow these simple rules.

Parking in the HCA is at a premium – there are just 2.2 parking spaces per townhouse. Many vehicles parked in the cluster have outdated license plates and/or expired inspection stickers. In December, 12 vehicles were cited for one or both violations and given 10 days to correct the violation, or be towed and stored off-site at the owner’s expense. Given the shortage of available parking, the HCA employs a simple rule: If the vehicle cannot be legally operated on a public road, it cannot be parked on Saffold Way.

Ending on a sour note, dog poop is on the rise on Saffold Way (again!), as are incidents of dogs not being leashed. Fairfax County leash laws and poop clean-up laws are enforced in Hillcrest Cluster through Fairfax County Animal Control.

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As always if you have any questions or concerns, please email us at info@hillcrest-cluster.com.