

# HILLCREST HAPPENINGS

## Information about Hillcrest Cluster - Fourth Quarter 2023

### 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2023 Annual Meeting of Hillcrest Cluster Association property owners and residents was held on 12 December in the Reston Association Community Center at Lake Anne. Dinner was provided by HCA and attendance was by both in-person residents and virtually by Google Meet. A copy of the minutes for the meeting is attached as the last page of this newsletter. The Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who attended, who voted for new Board members and who completed and submitted the Cluster Census form sent to all. Your direct and active involvement in the activities and business of the cluster is a key factor in HCA being one of the premier cluster associations in Reston. Thank you.

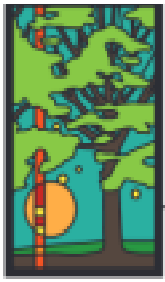
### HCA DUES FOR 2024

As you will see when reading the minutes of the annual meeting, cluster dues for 2024 will remain unchanged. By the time you receive this you should already have received, via the U.S. Mail, the invoice for your 2024 dues. If you have not, please reach out to the Board (email to [info@hillcrest-cluster.com](mailto:info@hillcrest-cluster.com)). The schedule and due date for payment of dues is explained on the cluster website. The schedule is as follows:

- At the end of the calendar year in December, invoices are sent to

homeowners.

- Hillcrest Cluster offers homeowners a discount, which is determined by the Board, if dues are paid by the last day of February of each year. The postmark on the payment will determine eligibility for any discount offered.
- Payment in full must be made by June 30th of each year to avoid accrual of interest.
- From the first day of July, all accounts with an unpaid balance will be charged interest at the rate of 1.5 percent per month. Interest will be charged to the account on the first day of every month in which there is an unpaid balance until the account is paid in full.
- If necessary, quarterly statements are mailed to all HCA Members with an outstanding balance on the first of April, July and October.
- All accounts with an overdue balance on December 31st will be referred to the HCA legal counsel for collection. After the account is referred and after due notice has been given, a lien will be filed against the title of the property. Should the account continue in arrears, further legal action may be taken. All legal expenses, including attorney fees, incurred by HCA in seeking to enforce it's governing documents shall be added to the account balance, and shall be the basis for a lien and/or lawsuit to recover all sums owed.



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### SNOW SEASON REMINDERS

Hillcrest Cluster offers snow removal services for all private roads within the community as well as sidewalks not directly in front of homes. Residents are responsible for clearing snow and ice from their home walkways and sidewalks directly in front of their property. It is expected that residents clear snow and ice from sidewalks in front of their home so that pedestrians can walk safely as soon after the conclusion of snowfall as safely possible. This community effort allows continued use of sidewalks and avoids pedestrian traffic in the plowed, and often slippery, roadways. Residents are also responsible for clearing snow immediately surrounding occupied parking spaces, during which the snow parking policy will be in effect.

Salt should not be used to melt ice, since it causes concrete to erode, and eventually requires expensive repair or replacement. Cat litter, sand, or non-salt substances are appropriate substitutes.

The Reston Association is responsible for plowing walking trails and pathways on the edge of the Cluster, which RA owns.

When Reston receives significant snowfall (usually two or more inches), households may be granted temporary sole privileges to no more than two parking spaces by clearing them and placing a temporary traffic cone in the spot with their house numbers on the

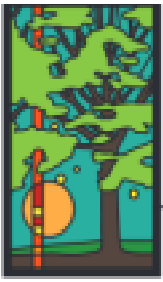
cone.

Notification that the policy is in effect will be made by posting the display board at the cluster entrance as well as via the cluster website, and ends when the snow emergency sign is removed.

Once the snow emergency is over, limited parking privileges are terminated and residents can park in any space, even if a marker remains, except those spaces designated as a disabled parking space.

### MAINTENANCE REMINDERS

**TRASH CANS.** You are reminded that the cluster maintenance covenants require that “unsightly items” be stored so as to not be visible from the roadway or by your neighbors. The Board has received complaints from some residents about houses failing to store items like trash cans, strollers, BBQs and other items around front entrances or other areas where they are clearly visible to all. Typically these items should be stored inside your house or inside a fenced back yard so they are not visible. All neighborhoods on Saffold Way have places available to store such items, e.g. inside the AC enclosure or other location. The exception is the Bryan Courts neighborhood and the Board provides a solution for that. On the cluster website ([www.hillcrest-cluster.com](http://www.hillcrest-cluster.com)) as part of the cluster standards for Bryan Courts, there are plans for a garbage can enclosure that the



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cluster has gotten pre-approved by Reston Association Design Review Board. There are multiple designs depending on your specific house number in Bryan Courts. If you choose to create such an enclosure, please notify the board of your intent using a DRB application from the RA website: [LinkFound Here](#). This form also can be picked up at the Reston Association Office (12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20191), or you can call (703) 435-6530 to request that the form be mailed to you. Completion will provide a place on the front of your house to store your trash cans between trash collections and save you hauling the cans around to the back of your home.

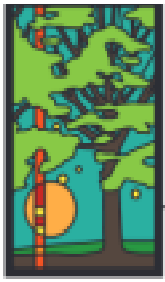
## BAMBOO

Bamboo is a rapidly spreading plant that Reston Association has declared an invasive species that must be removed throughout Reston. There are patches of bamboo within Hillcrest Cluster on both common grounds and on some owner's properties. The Board is working with Blade Runners to rid the common grounds of all bamboo. If you have bamboo growing on or near your property please begin working to remove it. If you plan to sell your home and there is an invasive species growing on your property, Reston Association will stop the sale until the species are removed. Thank you for your cooperation.

## GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

There are several houses that clearly need their rain gutters cleaned, preferably before winter cold and ice. These are apparent due to the weeds growing up out of the gutters. When the gutters are filled they often also

result in clogged downspouts. That leads to water buildup in the gutters which can back up against your roofing and then work its way down into your exterior walls and under your shingles. If it freezes while the water is built up, the ice will cause even more damage. These repairs can be very expensive and the water damage very messy. We are fortunate to have a regular stream of contractors who focus on cleaning gutters and downspouts and checking your roof while they are at it. They leave colored flyers on your door and any one of them will probably keep the water and ice damage from happening. Typically, having the cleaning done in the fall after all the leaves have fallen and again in late spring will keep them draining and flowing.



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## **ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**

Annual Meeting Attendees: 73 Owners & Residents

Annual meeting of HCA members called to order by Board President at 7:30pm

### **AGENDA**

#### **Board of Directors review 2023**

Amir reviewed and summarized all 2023 road work accomplished.

Alexandra reviewed and summarized 2023 work replacing/maintaining signs and reviewed new trash pickup contract renewal. Also answered question re: one weekly pickup vice two plus other issues raised.

Ben discussed annual dues collections and cluster tree maintenance accomplishments. Ben also answered questions re: tree cutting process and summarized renewal of Blade Runners' contract for landscape maintenance

Harvey summarized 2023 efforts re: street light maintenance, annual cluster picnic and cluster cleanup effort. Harvey also discussed progress on website maintenance and maintenance/update of the cluster resident/owner contact data file

Rick reviewed the requirement for HCA to do a capital asset plan/study to determine the value of all HCA assets, plan for their replacement if required and establish a replacement. Rick also reviewed the Operating budget and past decision to hire

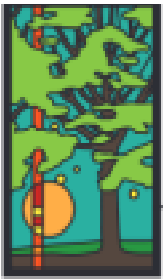
Capitol Management to send out dues notices, receive dues and pay the cluster's bills. Rick also reviewed the requirement for HCA to maintain an 'Operating Reserve' with a value equal to 8% of the Capital Reserve and how the Board is maintaining that fund. In summary, 2023 revenue exceeded projections plus there has been reduced spending during COVID resulting in an allocation of \$25K to the Capital Asset Reserve Fund and additionally \$5K to the Operating Reserve Fund.

#### **Board of Directors look forward to 2024**

Looking forward to 2024 Rick announced that there is no requirement for a dues increase and that spending has been, and will be, compliant with the 2021 Strategic Plan previously published. For 2024 the new landscape maintenance contract will be a 3-year (vice previous 5-year) fixed price contract with a cost increase of 30%. The renewal of the trash collection contract will also be for 3 years with a 3.5% annual increase.

Other 2024 planned expenditures include further work on stormwater remediation projects, tree maintenance and new common ground maintenance projects. Finally, Rick walked through the proposed 2024 budget sent to all owners, line by line and explained the \$70K carryover from 2023 to 2024. The Capital Asset Reserve Fund should be \$800K and we continue to add \$25K each year. The Operating Reserve Fund target value is \$60K and we will continue to add \$5K per year until it reaches that value.





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## Call for member's vote to approve the Board's proposed 2024 budget

Vote for approval was unanimous approval by all present, zero nays.

**Open discussion and Q & A.** Questions from owners/residents present included:

*The bump at the entrance to Saffold Way, can it/will it be repaired?* The Board explained that the bump is not on HCA property, but belongs to the State of VA with Fairfax County maintenance. No plans by the Board to do anything with it. It exists to provide proper water drainage and serves as an initial sort of speed bump to reduce speeding onto Saffold Way.

*Cellular phone coverage in the cluster, particular in the Lower Bridges neighborhood.* The Board explained that we have nothing to do with that coverage. An explanation was provided about the reduced number of cellular antenna sites in the general area which is in part, cause for the poor coverage.

*Leaf collection, i.e. how many times are they collected and will there be another collection in 2023, concern about large quantity of leaves remaining in some areas.* The Board explained that perhaps all leaf collections had been accomplished but that we would ask Blade Runners for one more collection (which was achieved the week after this meeting). Other comments from attendees encouraged mulching the leaves into the grass rather than collecting and hauling them away to improve the grass growth.

## Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

## Photos taken at the annual meeting.

