

Caroline Oaks Newsletter

March 2021

YARD WASTE PICKUP RESUMES

Our trash hauler, American Disposal, will resume yard waste collection on Thursdays (our regular pickup day) starting 4 March. They further advise, “all yard waste now needs to be placed in personal containers labelled as yard waste or the brown biodegradable paper bags.” See their attached flyer.

On 23 February, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted 9-1 to officially prohibit the use of plastic bags for yard waste by amending the Solid Waste Management Ordinance, a move that supporters say is necessary to reduce pollution and make the county more environmentally friendly.

Background provided by the Board of Supervisors: Fairfax County does not own or operate a compost facility, so licensed waste collectors operating here must send collected yard waste to commercial composting facilities operating in the region. The resulting compost is a desirable and highly valued product. When plastic bags are introduced into the compost process, it is very difficult to remove plastic shreds from the final product entirely. Plastic in the compost, even in small amounts, reduces overall product quality and provides a pathway for the plastic to get into our environment.

Plastic bags are not necessary for the storage or collection of yard waste. Collection using a reusable container or paper bags are the optimal methods for managing yard waste while protecting the quality of compost. Because the paper bag becomes a part of the finished compost (they are designed to be compostable), the practice also reduces the quantity of process waste requiring disposal.

RECYCLING

Many items that seem to be appropriate candidates for recycling are not. Placing such items in bins only serve to hinder operations at recycling centers, thereby raising operational costs as economically worthwhile items are separated from those that are not. Glass bottles, for instance, when placed in bins or trash containers, wind up either at the landfill or incinerator. Instead, recommend bringing them to one of the County’s “Purple Can” glass-only recycling centers. Nearest to us is the one at the West Springfield Government Center on Rolling Road. From there they are brought to a processing plant where they are ground up, finding a useful second life in road paving projects.

The other issues with household recycling are too numerous to write about here. Lots of additional information is at:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/glass>

BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL FIRE HAZARDS

Clothes Dryers: The Architectural Control Committee recommends attending to clothes dryer lint build up in traps, vents, and ducts. Lint is combustible and poses a fire risk. Build up reduces airflow and dryer efficiency. It can also increase humidity levels causing mildew and mold to develop in walls and insulation. DITY cleaning kits are sold at hardware stores or, alternatively, you can hire a service provider.

Fireplaces: If you use your fireplace, the Committee recommends tending to chimney buildup of soot and creosote. Both are flammable black substances that can coat the insides of chimneys and create a fire hazard. Quoting from a recent Washington Post article, "The Chimney Safety Institute of America recommends cleaning when there's one-eighth of an inch of sooty buildup in masonry fireplaces, sooner for factory built fireplaces." The article goes on to caution, "chimney service [companies] may use inspect-and-sweep opportunities to recommend expensive, unneeded work. So proceed cautiously if a chimney service says yours is unsafe unless you pay thousands for a new liner or similar expensive repairs."

Please keep yourself and adjoining neighbors safe.

DOG URINE AND LAMPPOSTS

The Board is asking residents to keep Fido from urinating on lampposts. In the past two years we have replaced a few corroded posts at some considerable expense. The professional lighting specialists we employ say this is a common problem. The Board will also investigate acquiring and attaching appropriate signage to the posts.

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

The Board held its first meeting of the year on 28 January. Minutes are posted at the Caroline Oaks website:

<http://carolineoaks.com/carolineoaks.com/WELCOME.html>

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM

Somewhere in the murky past we were part of the Neighborhood Watch program as evidenced by the fact we have a sign at the community entrance on Glenbard Court. No Board member nor the Fairfax County Police has any documentation or recollection. At our request Fairfax

County Police conducted an onsite security assessment on 8 Feb. There were some findings and recommendations, none that should be considered serious. Our community is safe, and the reinstatement of the program should not be construed as anything more than an ounce of prevention. More details to follow once we are registered in the program.