

Caroline Oaks Newsletter

September 2021

BBQ Bash

Many thanks to Audrey Achnou, Peter Roy Court resident, for organizing and staging this community event on 28 August. It was the first such event since the community was established in the late 1980s. Also, many thanks to the residents who contributed food, drink, and games thereby making this a closer-knit community.

Yard Waste Policy Modification

Effective yesterday yard waste (leaves, brush, grass clippings) is to be placed in trash receptacles. This is a change from the 6-month-old policy requiring separate collection of yard waste in paper bags. According to the county website this modification is necessary because of ongoing labor shortages and should last approximately two months. Our trash hauler informed me via robocall so it's probable they will not collect paper bags containing yard waste. Will advise when the modification is rescinded. More at:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/news/temporary-change-separate-yard-waste-collection-requirements>

Winter is Coming: Chimneys & Fireplaces

Thanks to Walt Seiberling, William Kirk Lane resident, for providing the following advice:

Winter will soon be upon us. A fireplace is nice to keep you warm and cozy during the cold months. Our oldest townhomes are approaching 35 years of age. A standard chimney setup lasts around 20 years. If you still have an original fireplace then you need to be aware of wear and tear through the years. We have had a few instances of chimney chutes (those sitting atop roofs) which have fallen over due to deteriorated attachments. Additionally, rusted chimney caps may cause leaks. It is advised that you replace rusted chimney caps with stainless steel caps to prevent leaks into the home. It is in the safety of all to ensure you check your chimney for rust, cracks, and functionality prior to lighting any fires. A lot of the chimney companies will assist in these services, but some major repairs may require a general contractor.

Additionally, a related issue was addressed in the February newsletter and is repeated here:

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.”

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will likely occur the second week of November in the Pohick Library meeting room (subject to availability and no onerous COVID restrictions). Details will be included in a mailing a few weeks ahead of the event along with the usual proxy cards.

Please send me discussion items for inclusion on the agenda.

Reserve Study & Dues

A reserve study was conducted in July and as a result the Board decided at its August meeting that there will be no dues increase in 2022.

Virginia law requires community associations to conduct a reserve study every five years with an annual review by the Board for any needed adjustments.

Reserve accounts are designed to allow the association to repair or replace community property controlled by the association when that property wears out or becomes obsolete over time (think roads, sidewalks, fences, etc.). By collecting funds and allocating proper amounts of funds in reserve, HOAs avoid resorting to special assessments. Reserve funds help spread out the cost of upkeep over time, and more equitably shares those costs across all members as they use the property.

Our study was conducted by Reserve Advisors.

Trash Containers

Keep the community neat and tidy. Trash containers and recycling bins are to be removed from sight shortly after trash pickup. In other words, they should not be on display in driveways, exterior staircases or adjacent to fences awaiting the next weekly collection. Place them in garages, backyards or indoors, i.e., **out of sight**.