

# COMMONS AT CORDATA

*Welcome to the Commons*



**The Commons at Cordata is a community of “air space” condo homes.** An air space condo defines the boundary by an imaginary block of air that sits on the property boundaries. Everything inside the block of air is owned and maintained by the homeowner. Properties such as ours are setup as stand alone condos because it allows the developer to put more homes in a smaller acreage.

Our community consists of 77 air space condo homes. The entire Commons at Cordata Condominium consists of 27.736 acres. The units (homes) and the private roads (including common parking areas) total 8.932 acres. The wetland buffers and conservation easement tracts total 18.804 acres. The development extends along June Rd. to Aldrich Rd.; from Aldrich to almost the Mahogany St. trail; and completes the square area just west of the The Village at Cordata development.

**The Commons at Cordata has been built on surrounding wetlands** which are supervised by the City of Bellingham. Wetlands are precious habitats that provide refuge for unique wildlife and enrich the land. The term wetland is used to describe bogs, swamps, and marshes. A wetland can stay wet all year long, or it may be an area that's only wet during the rainy seasons.

Our development is governed by **The Commons at Cordata Condominium Owners Association, COA**. An association is an organization of homeowners in a planned development. The purpose of a home owners association is to provide a structure for preserving, maintaining, and enhancing the value of homes, property, and infrastructure. Each unit owner in the Commons at Cordata development owns their land and is responsible to maintain their home interior and exterior along with landscaping. **Any modification to the exterior requires the consent of the association.**

Our development was built in 4 phases.

Phase 1: 12 condo homes built by Janicki Homes, Lots #1- 12 (Beginning Fuchsia Dr. and Verbena Lane)

Phase 2: 25 condo homes built by Janicki Homes, Lots #13 - 37 (Middle Fuchsia Dr. and Fuchsia Loop)

Phase 3: 22 condo homes built by Janicki Homes, Lots #38 - 59 (All of Kodiak Lane)

Phase 4: 18 condo homes built by Grandview Homes, Lots #60 - 77 (End of Fuchsia Dr. and Dandelion Lane)

Because our development has been built on a wetland, each home is subject to pervious and impervious restrictions declared by the city of Bellingham. The Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR) is the portion of a lot that is covered by impenetrable materials, such as concrete. The ISR number is dictated by the city of Bellingham for each property in the Commons and differs from unit to unit.

**Pervious surfaces** allow water to percolate into the soil to filter out pollutants and recharge the water table.

**Impervious surfaces** are solid surfaces that don't allow water to penetrate, forcing it to run off. Impervious surfaces are mainly artificial structures—such as pavements, roads, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots, that are covered by impenetrable materials such as asphalt.

## **The Commons at Cordata Condominium Owners Association (COA)**

**COA** stands for Condo Owner Association and **HOA** is for Homeowner Association. Most associations have mandatory membership and require monthly or quarterly fees paid into them by homeowners.

**CC&Rs** (Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions) - This is a legally binding document that is officially recorded and filed with WA state. The CC&Rs cover the rights and obligations of the condo association to its members and vice versa.

**By-laws** - Provide guidance to the board on how to enforce the CC&Rs, as well how to conduct elections. The bylaws establish the structure for the day-to-day governance of the condo association.

**Rules and Regulations** - Focus on the internal workings of the association and include rules that are important for the community to follow as outlined in the CC&Rs and by-laws.

**Board of Directors** - The board is a group of individuals who live in the community who have volunteered and been elected to represent homeowners. They are responsible for upholding the CC&Rs, by-laws, covenants and restrictions of the association, as well as overseeing its operation.

**Board Meetings** - The Board of Directors hold work meetings and vote on current issues that need to be addressed for the community. These meeting are open for homeowners to attend as observers. A short period is held after the meeting at the end of the meeting for homeowners to comment on items discussed in the agenda. Minutes are taken at meetings and once approved, distributed to homeowners.

**Resolutions** - One of the functions of the Board of Directors is to pass resolutions which clarify a rule or policy.

**Executive Sessions** - A closed meeting where the board of directors discuss confidential matters such as delinquent dues, legal or rule violations, and homeowner requests. No motion can be adopted in an executive session. Those must be done in an open meeting.

**Annual Meetings** - Typically, an association will have an annual meeting once each year to discuss topics with everyone in the community and elect the board.

**Annual Audit** - Required by law for associations over 50 units. An independent CPA provides an opinion over the association financial statements.

**Reserve Study** - The reserve fund is money set aside for long-term replacement and maintenance. This fund helps to prevent unexpected special assessment fees and is required by law.

**COA fee** - The amount of money that must be paid monthly by homeowners for their residential property. These fees assist with maintaining and improving the common property of the association. These fees are subject to change with the annual budget.

**Special Assessments** - Major improvements levied by the **COA** in addition to monthly fees. If sufficient funds are set aside for future repairs, as guided by the Reserve Study, special assessments should only be necessary in rare circumstances.

**Advisory Committees** - Residents who advise and help support the board through recommendations. The volunteers allow the board to function more efficiently and create an ongoing feedback loop on important issues.

**Renters** - Renters must follow the CC&Rs, by-laws, and rules of the COA. Homeowners are responsible for any violations incurred by their renter.

**Property Management** - The property management company is an agent of our condo association. They act to implement the guidelines set forth by the board, help to enforce the COA rules and regulations, and collect dues. They also provide advice and guidance to ensure that the association adheres to state and local laws while providing a useful framework to develop our community in a way that preserves home values.

## Monthly Fees

### What do they pay for?

#### Property Management

- Collects dues, follows up with delinquencies
- Advises the board on governing
- Follows up on homeowner complaints
- Helps homeowners comply with the governing documents and rules
- Handles resale certificates
- Sends welcome kits to new owners
- Keeps record of owners, renters, & contact info
- Pays bills
- Provides monthly finance reports
- Obtains service providers

#### Landscaping

- Maintenance along June Rd.
- Maintenance of Common areas
- Plantings
- Tree removal and trimming
- Blackberry removal

#### Electricity

- Street Lights
- Pumps

#### Insurance

- Directors and Officers liability
- Crime
- General Liability

#### General Maintenance

- Maintenance of roads
- Storm water system
- Sewer system

#### Winter Services

- Plowing of snow on roads

#### Office Supplies

- Meetings
- Printing, Copies
- Mailing

#### Legal

- Action to enforce rules and regulations
- Action to enforce payment of dues
- Legal advice

#### Financial

- Annual audit

#### Reserves - Planning for Future Maintenance

- Roads, Sidewalks
- Street Lights, Mailboxes
- Fencing
- Storm system and Sewer system
- Pump stations
- Retention ponds
- Street lights
- Mailboxes

Think of our community as a small city and the monthly association fees as the monies needed to maintain our city. The association is designed to protect property value and create enjoyable living spaces for people to live. From board members to homeowners, property managers to service providers, everyone must do their part to keep things running smoothly and provide the services and maintenance needed. Understanding what the COA is all about, how it operates, volunteering your time, and striving to be a helpful neighbor changes, everyone's experience for the better.

We all live here together, so how do we make it work?

#### Living in Community

- Our homes are close together. Say hello to your neighbors.
- If problems arise, encourage solutions by asking questions rather than simply stating opinions.
- Invest in the process of building our community without being tied to the outcome.
- Look at every situation as an opportunity for personal growth and building relationships.
- You can choose your actions and your attitudes.
- Remember to pick up after your pets.
- Volunteering and being involved can be fun. All volunteers are donating their time. Thank them.
- Respect others and value differences, even if you disagree with them.
- Leave the common area guest parking for guests. No resident is permitted to park in guest stalls.
- **Drive Slowly. The Speed Limit is 15 mph.** All streets are fire lanes and do not allow street parking.
- Contribute to build a community you want to live in. Your contribution matters.
- Become familiar with the CC&R's, Bylaws and Rules and Regulations for our COA. Come to a board meeting.

#### **Our Property Management Company**

Son-Rise Property Management  
109 E. Chestnut St. Bellingham, WA 98225  
Manager: Stephanie Lewis  
Email: slewis@son-rise.net  
Emergency number: 360.647.4020

**Property Modification** - If you intend to make changes to the exterior of your structure, erecting any structures, fencing, or landscaping projects, a **Property Modification Request Form** must be submitted to the association board of directors for approval. The board will review your request at the next board meeting.

**Blackberry Removal** - The blackberry plant is an invasive species. The city of Bellingham has approved its removal in our wetlands with the following restrictions;

- Blackberry plants may be cut back from your split rail fence.
- Look to remove the plant at its root.
- Dispose and remove ALL blackberry plant cuttings from the area to discourage fires and rats from inhabiting.
- Replace the exposed cut area with a wetland approved species such as salmonberry, ocean spray, and snowberry plants. Do not plant any invasive plants such as ivy. No bark. Wetland needs to be natural.

**Tree Assessment** - The COA will do a yearly assessment of the trees in the wetlands. If any pose a threat, the association will hire a certified arborist to assess the situation. All tree removal must be approved by the city of Bellingham through a tree permit process.

**Guest Parking** - We have 25 total designated guest parking spaces for 77 homes. That breaks down to 1 guest parking space for every 3 homes. **Guest Parking is for 48 hours only**. Homeowners or renters parking in guest parking are in violation of the COA rules and regulations.

**Winter Services** - The roads in our community will be plowed when 3” of snow have accumulated. Be patient as the plow is slow in coming. Homeowners are responsible for removing snow from their own driveway and sidewalk.

**Renting** - If renting out a unit, owners are responsible for ensuring that their tenants have a copy of and comply with the COA rules and regulations. A copy of the lease must be filed with the property manager as well as the names and contact information of renters. No short term rentals.

**Selling** - If you sell your unit, the seller must purchase a resale certificate. This is required by Washington state law with the purchase and sale of condominiums. Contact the property manager for details.

**The Wetlands** - The Commons at Cordata community in conjunction with the City of Bellingham are the stewards of the wetlands. A split rail fence has been built to designate the wetland area.

#### **How To Protect Our Wetlands**

1. Use wetland approved herbicides, organic fertilizers and pesticides on your property.
2. Avoid non-native and invasive species of plants.
3. Do not dump garbage, grass or other debris in wetland
4. No filling or clearing of wetland areas
5. Pick up after your pets.
6. Wash your car with eco-friendly cleaning products. Make sure storm drains are clean and free of pet feces, toxic chemicals, fertilizers, and motor oil, which eventually wash into our wetlands and pollute them.
7. Some home owners are responsible for maintaining the storm disbursements located within their lot to protect the wetlands. Make sure this maintenance is done yearly.

**Maintaining Storm Disbursement Areas** - Infiltration basins are designed so that stormwater eventually soaks into the ground, imitating natural conditions and recharging groundwater supplies. In addition to recharging groundwater, infiltration basins also trap pollutants, making them a highly valued stormwater management tool.

**Do you have one?** Homeowners with storm disbursement areas will notice a rectangular pile of gravel near the split rail fence behind their home. It needs to be inspected and cleaned it out annually. The gravel must be free of debris, silt and dirt. The gravel cannot be covered, build on, or have plantings in it. If there is standing water on the gravel, the trench is plugged and needs maintenance.

**Retention Pond** - The Retention pond located on June Rd. serves the Commons and the Cottages. The pump station is owned and serviced by the city of Bellingham. The Commons at Cordata Condominium is responsible for 58% of any June Road pond maintenance cost, while June Road Cottages Condominium is responsible for 42% of any June Road pond maintenance cost. Retention ponds provide added environmental benefits of slowing down the flow of water, filtering contaminants naturally, and allowing debris and silt to sink to the bottom of the basin.