

Frenchtown Woods - Community News

Spring 2012



FRENCHTOWN WOODS MAINTENANCE CORPORATION
NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, APRIL 13TH, 2012

On the web at: www.neighborhoodlink.com/Frenchtown_Woods

A MESSAGE FROM THE FTW PRESIDENT



Welcome, Neighbors!

The 2012 Board of Directors is made up of five core members, with all having served more than 3 years of service to the community.

Even with stable membership, we share in the responsibility of leadership by passing the roles of the leadership amongst other members of the board. I've seen first-hand how this has allowed our maintenance association to grow and become more solidified in it's objectives to provide service to our community.

I welcome you to join us at our monthly meetings to learn more of what's going on in our community, and how you can help to mold our future. We meet at 6:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of every month @ Glasgow Medical Center, Room 209. We have great relationships, attendance, and participation from our Local, County, and State Representatives. The intent of invitation is to keep FTW in the forefront of our elected officials,

provide a two-way means of information exchange on community impact issues, and to leverage available funds & services provided by these agencies.

If you are unable to attend, but would like for us to address a concern of yours, please contact our Property Management consultant, **Brandywine Valley Properties**, who will forward your issue to the Board of Directors, or pass it along to the appropriate agency. Either way, we commit to providing you feedback.

In this issue, we will provide information on some of the projects being undertaken this year, in addition to other topics of importance.

NEW PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT:

Brandywine Valley Properties

PO BOX 7367 • Wilmington DE • 19803-0367

Main Office: 302-475-7660

Fax Line: 302-475-7664

Property Mgr: Kim Carroll (302)-328-5248

kcarrollbvp@comcast.net or BVPProps@comcast.net

Valuable Contact Info:

Police, Fire, Ambulance: 911

Police (Non-Emergency): 302-573-2800
New Castle County: 302-395-5555
DE Crime Stoppers: 800-TIP-3333
Christiana Hospital ER: 302-733-1000
Glasgow Medical Center: 302-836-8350
Newark Emergency Rm: 302-738-4300

HOTLINES:

Child Abuse Reporting: 800-292-9582
Domestic Violence: 302-762-6110
Rape Crisis: 302-761-9100
Suicide Prevention: 800-784-2433
Substance Abuse: 800-662-4357
CONTACT (24hr Crisis): 302-761-9100
Poison Info Center: 800-222-1222

DE Helpline: 800-464-4357
Physicians Referral: 302-428-4100

Brandywine Valley Properties:

PO BOX 7367
Wilmington, DE 19803-0367
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FTW ANNUAL MEETING - November '11

No Increase of Annual Assessments for 2012

The Board of Directors voted to maintain the annual assessment for 2012 at \$115 per household.

The Board negotiates with our partners in landscaping, snow removal, and general contracting on an annual basis, to ensure our community maintains some of the lowest annual assessments in the area.

Irrigation System Installed to Protect Trees Along Berms

A drip-line irrigation system was installed along the tree lines of the berms along RT 40.

In efforts to reduce tree replacement, the drip-line irrigation will provide a needed water supply for thirsty trees during the hot, dry, summer months.



Entrance Signs Replaced at Main Entrances



Three entrance signs were replaced at the main entrances in efforts to continue the beautification of FTW.

In addition to the sign replacement, mulching & pruning was completed during the latter part of Spring.

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Annual Assessments are collected to pay for landscaping, snow removal, & general beautification of FTW, amongst other priorities.

Annual Assessments - Rules of the Road

As property home owners in Frenchtown Woods, all of us acknowledged the fact that being a member of this community means paying assessments. This acknowledgement should have taken place as part of the process for closing on your house at settlement. Included in this newsletter is the itemized budget for 2012. As you can see, these are expenses that are - and should be shared equally amongst us. No homeowner is exempt from paying.

The 2012 process for assessments, including cost, billing, schedule and late fees are as follows:

- \$115 per household, net 30 days (postmarked on 1/15/2012)
- If unpaid within 30 days, interest accrues at 12% annually, applied in monthly increments of 1%
- Second Notice is sent after 60 days past due (3/15/12), with a final warning at past 90 (4/15/12)

If you are unable to pay in full, contact Brandywine Valley Properties to arrange payment terms. The by-laws that govern FTW provide the Board guidance on collections of annual assessments. The Board has worked hard to establish a fair and equitable collection policy in keeping with the governing documents. There is a threshold amount over which the Board will invoke this policy. If we must send your case to our attorney, the by-laws specify that you are responsible to pay all fees associated with the collection (attorney, court fees, etc). Demand letters are charged at \$50; court fees are \$280. Collection fees can quickly grow well beyond the assessment cost. Please assist us in preventing these actions by making your payment on-time, or scheduling arrangements with BVP right away.

WITH AN ANNUAL BUDGET EXPECTED TO EXCEED ANNUAL ASSESSMENT COLLECTIONS, THE BOARD STILL ELECTED TO NOT INCREASE DUES IN 2012

2012 Budget - Annual Operating Plan



The Board of Directors for FTW manage an annual budget of around \$60,000. Variables such as snowfall, can have a big impact on a budget that is balanced, or one that exceeds expectations.

Fortunately, a mild winter

occurred, enabling us to secure much needed reserves.

Additionally, rising costs such as fuel, contributed to increased expenses in maintaining the open space lawn-care which includes grass cutting and mulching.

Over the past several years, these added costs have cut into reserves, and could ultimately lead to a vote to in-

crease annual assessments in the future.

The Board carefully analyzes expenses on a monthly basis, and evaluates all bids for contract on a regular basis.

Maintaining the property values of our homes in Frenchtown Woods is always our first priority in any decision.



Limited Parking in FTW. Please be considerate of your neighbors.

Neighborhood Parking

Please be considerate when parking in the neighborhood. Commercial vehicles are not permitted long term, and could be subject to towing.

The parking of any motor vehicle or off-highway vehicle on a surface other than one that has been treated and hardened to accommodate motor vehicles is prohibited.

Also, please be considerate of your neighbors and avoid parking behind driveways and in front of mailboxes.

Around the Neighborhood...

Architectural Reviews

When planning to make any exterior changes to your home, it is important to submit an Architectural Review (ARC) application to Brandywine Valley Properties.

If changes are made to the outside of your home without prior approval, you may legally be forced to remove any changes that have been made. If you have questions, please contact Kim Carroll at BVP (302-328-5248)



Exterior Paint Colors

Spring cleaning often includes refreshing exterior shutters with a touchup of paint. When the neighborhood was built, the builder provided homeowners with a list of paint colors used so that residents could maintain a consistent appearance in the community. The following colors are consistent with the builders specifications, and do not require an ARC review.

MAB Paint Colors (or Lowe's):

Seashore Collection

#573 - Concord Blue

#515 - Haddon Blue

#471 - Ranch Red

#226 - Fairmont Green

#480-8 - Smoke (gray)



Litter Pick-Up

There is quite a bit of debris in the open spaces and litter blowing through the community. We ask that you pick up any debris or trash when finished playing in the open spaces.

Another potential source of trash is from garbage cans. During windy conditions, lids to cans are susceptible to blowing off of the cans. Please be sure that lids are tightly secured and cans are positioned where they can not easily tip over. On that note, thanks to those residents who pick up trash while walking through the neighborhood!

Pet Waste

Picking up your pet's waste is not only the right thing to do, it's the law. Violations can vary between \$100 to \$1,000 with accumulated convictions.

For details of violations, visit:
<http://www2.nccde.org/landuse/CodeViolations/PropertyMaintenanceViolations>

Aside from the law, there are both health and environmental reasons to pick up dog or cat waste and place it in a specific type of composting container or garbage can where it can be taken away to a dump where runoff is controlled.

Please carry pet waste collection bags when walking your pets through the neighborhood. Deposit the collected waste in a public waste receptacle or your own garbage can.



NCC Code Enforcement - 10 Most Common Code Violations

New Castle County has expanded its code enforcement staff to assist communities in preserving the quality of the neighborhoods. The code enforcement staff has identified the Top 10 violations:

1. Property Maintenance Violations: structural issues - interior and exterior
2. High Weeds & Grass: can not exceed 8"
3. Unregistered/Inoperable Motor Vehicles
4. Trash
5. Debris

6. Parking on grass
7. Signs
8. Building without permits
9. Home-based businesses
10. Vacant, unsecured homes



To submit a complaint, visit the NCC Property Code Enforcement page at www2.nccde.org/landuse/CodeViolations/Complaints

HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION IN NEW CASTLE COUNTY - VISIT WWW.DSWA.COM

Pine Tree Corners Transfer Station

276 Pine Tree Road, Townsend DE

- Saturday - April 7th, 8am to 4pm
- Saturday - May 5th, 8am to 4pm
- Saturday - July 7th, 8am to 4pm

Old Curtis Paper Mill Site

282 Paper Mill Road, Newark DE

- Saturday - Sept 1st, 8am to 4pm
- Saturday - Dec 1st, 8am to 4pm

Frawley Stadium Parking Lot (Blue Rocks)

801 South Madison St, Wilmington DE

- Saturday - Oct 6th, 8am to 4pm

Planning to Install a Shed?

Take a moment to read the FAQ's posted on the New Castle County website. Most sheds require a permit to be issued prior to install and/or set-up:

<http://www2.nccde.org/landuse/Permits/ResidentialAdditions>



A few of the most important FAQs are:

Q: What size shed can I build without getting a permit?

A: You can build a shed up to 200 sq ft without a permit, but all setback requirements must still be followed.

Q: How far does my shed have to be from my property line?

A: Must be 3 ft from rear and rear-side property lines. For side setbacks, consult with Unified Development Code for minimum setback requirements.

Q: Other restrictions?

A: First, can not place in front of house. Second, structure cannot occupy more than 30% of rear yard.

Mark Your Calendars

Save the date! Glasgow Regional Park Community Day!

WHEN: Saturday, March 24th, 2012
(rain date set for 3/31)

TIME: 10am-4pm (Skate Park Grand Opening @ 9am)

WHERE: Glasgow Regional Park
(routes 40 & 896)



Highlights:

- 9am Skate Park Grand Opening
- 5K Fun Run/Walk
- Sports & Children's activities
- Health & Wellness Screenings
- Children's Egg Hunt
- Pet Services & Contests
- Food & Entertainment from local venues
- Police, Fire, & Emergency Services

Community Day is Hosted by:
NCC Councilman Dave Tackett

Around the County

NCCo announces measures to reduce foreclosures:

New Castle County Executive Paul Clark announced two measures designed to reduce residential foreclosures.

Clark issued an Executive Order directing the County's Office of Finance not to foreclose on any residential property for back taxes so long as the owner enters into a good faith payment plan. In addition, Clark will seek County Council approval for an amnesty program for penalties on back taxes. Under his proposal, any residential property owner with back taxes due can pay them in full through May 31 and have all outstanding penalties waived.

The foreclosure moratorium will apply to owner-occupied primary residences. Vacant properties will not be included. The Office of Finance will determine the payment plan details with each owner. The amnesty program will apply to penalties on property taxes but not sewer fees, which are currently due to the County.

In all cases, property owners must visit the County Government Center to make arrangements. New Castle County also operates several ongoing programs to keep homeowners in their homes.

The Department of Community Services offers three interest-free loan programs for eligible homeowners to pay for qualified repairs to their homes. The Department also assists homeowners in retaining ownership through referrals to counseling agencies.



Co-Hosted by:

DE State Sen. Bethany Hall-Long
DE State Rep. Earl Jaques
NCC Exec: Paul Clark
NCC Councilwoman: Lisa Diller
NCC Councilman: Bill Powers