

Newsletter

Forest Pond

Volume 3, Issue 1

The HOA Annual Meeting

On Tuesday, 8 January 2008, the Forest Pond HOA Board of Directors presented to the attending homeowners the "State of Our Community Address".

The HOA Board presented an analytical view of the Quality of Life rating for our neighborhood, a financial review of the past four years, a financial outlook for 2008 and 2009, as well as a projec-



Your Board of Directors Are Here to Maintain and Guide the Community

tion for years 2010 through 2014.

The Board made everyone aware of the history of Forest Pond HOA Dues and the necessity of increasing those dues automatically every year for the next 6 years.

An Open Forum was held for attending members to sound off with not only their concerns but about what they would like to see and have done in the upcoming year.

The On-Going Projects were discussed and shown that not all things take money to do but rather time of the volunteers that care about this community.

The talk then turned to the task of electing new Board of

Directors and new committee members. Some of the current Board of Directors talked about going forward as board members for 2008 and new volunteers stood up and offered their services.

The election went forward with the results of re-electing three current board members and electing five new board members and two new committee members.

Inside you will learn the names of your new Board of Directors ; so keep reading!

"Forest Pond has its new board, and perhaps a new heart as well," Rich Haag, Charlotte Observer, Sunday, 13 January 2008.



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2008 HOA Dues

When you get your 2008 HOA Dues bill in the mail - you will notice immediately that the dues were increased 10% from \$180 to \$198 for the year.

The Board of Directors have raised the HOA dues for the

first time (in twelve years) since the inception of the Forest Pond HOA and that was in 1996!

The good news about this is that you will be able to pay your dues online this year using a secure method.

You can pay by credit card, debit card, EFT (electronic fund transfer), and of course, by the old fashioned method, mailing your check via USPS.

It's your choice on how you pay from now on.

Special points of interest:

- Pieces of the money pie
- Be aware of your signage
- Community health
- Teach your child safety

2007 Financials—Where the Money Went

The chart to the right shows how our dues were used during 2007. Disbursements left \$955 in the bank and a debt of \$2,600 to carry over to 2008.

We collected \$77,365 from HOA dues, the Special Assessment and repaid legal expenses. We paid out as follows:

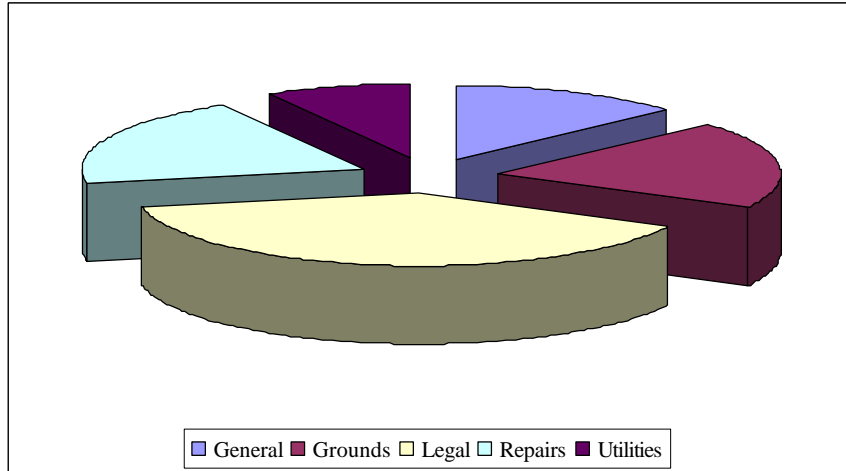
General Operating Fees: \$10,184

Grounds Fees: \$14,966

Legal Fees: \$29,906

Repairs: \$14,992

Utilities: \$6,362



Forest Pond — Microcosm in Larger Community

For those of you who do not deviate from the everyday norm and who are content to sit back and let life slide by as you live yours in relative comfort - WAKE UP!

A comparison of the Quality of Life Study done by the City of Charlotte shows that we live in a “Transitioning Neighborhood” and that transition is a downward spiral at this time.

If you don’t know what that means - get out of your house, get in your car and drive through the surrounding neighbor-

hoods, I mean the neighborhoods surrounding ours!

Three of the four measurement standards for our larger community were going down with only one climbing and that measurement is the social aspect of our educational system.

Property values for our neighbors were way down compared to ours and we need to fight tooth and nail to keep those from falling!

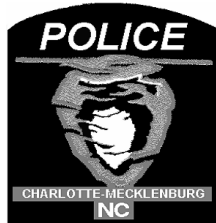
“Ask not what your community can do for you...”

So to paraphrase a quote from President John F Kennedy: ‘...ask what can you do for your community (today)?’

New CMPD Community Relations Officer

I would like to introduce everyone to the newest member of our community Officer Dave Johnson.

Officer Johnson has replaced Officer Chickoree as one of the Community Relations Officers assigned to the University Division and most importantly to our Zone of the division.



Officer Johnson attended the HOA Annual Meeting and introduced himself and talked to us about being “nosey neighbors”. He said we all should be nosey neighbors because we are the first line of defense against property crime in our area.

He reported that our crime statistics were down from 2006 to 2007 by a whopping 71% and that is due the diligence we put into calling 911. Just remember - you too, can be a NOSEY NEIGHBOR.

When in doubt about a situation - call 911 - they would rather check it out and it be nothing then do a crime report after the fact!

Sign Violators Beware

A tougher ordinance took effect JAN 1, and code enforcers have issued the first fines under the beefed rules.

Basically, the signage rule states that the City right of way is first 11 feet of ground and sidewalk beyond the end of the pavement. Highway medians (and traffic triangles) also are in the right of way.

Only government authorized signs are permitted in this zone. The fines are now \$100 for the first offense and can climb to \$1,000 per sign beginning with the 11th citation.

An important revision to the law is who pays the fine and that is the person or business that benefits from the sign.

The revision also states any sign professional or hand-lettered “lost dog” or “yard sale” signs will be illegal if it is in the right of way.

So if your realty company posts a sign within 11 feet of the right of way, you and the realty company



will share in the fines.

To be sure you are within the limits of the law, measure the location of your sign before you stick it in the ground; and ensure that your realty company knows and understand the law as well.

A good rule of thumb is that if the sign is closer than 5 regular paces to the edge of the road, you are too close!

\$30,000 Legal Bill

You are probably asking why we paid out nearly \$30,000 in 2007 for legal fees and you have the right to know.

The HOA Board of Directors are charged with ensuring that all homeowners pay their just dues. That means not only the annual dues but the Special Assessments as well.

In order to do that, we have to follow the letter of the law and that means we have to employ strict guidelines when trying to collect non-payers.

We have to spend money to collect money and take appropriate steps to ensure that we will eventually get the money from the non-payers. We place a lien against that homeowners residence.

When a title change needs to take place on a house that has a lien against it, we can block the sale of the residence until such time as we are paid in full for



Legal fees have a way of making money fly away!

all past due amounts plus the legal fees paid in asserting that lien against their house.

In other words, the house buyer can't take delivery of the house they want and the seller cannot be clear of the house until we have certified that all funds are paid in full. Waiting until closing day means that the buyer and seller are now at our tender mercies.

Special Assessments

Using the Financial Reserves Study as a basis for evaluating future fiscal needs gave us an advantage last year but it was just a little short due to changes in the Cost of Living Index.

We had calculated that the \$50 SA would give us a safety buffer of \$5,000 but we missed the mark by \$7,600 - we ended up in the red again to the total of -\$2,600.

By increasing the HOA Annual Dues to \$198 for 2008 and applying another \$60 SA this year we might break even. However, there are no hard and fast rules to allow us to clearly see how this year will fare.

The Board of Directors are looking at all avenues to help lower our operating costs and still keep our neighborhood looking

good. They are putting their best foot forward so that our property values will stay up there instead of falling like those communities around us.

We can do our part by paying our dues and SA's in a timely manner so that our neighborhood can lead our sister communities instead of following them in a rush toward devaluation.

Forest Pond

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Putting good words to work!



Safety Tips for Parents

Instruct your child on how to contact the Police Department, Fire Department or Ambulance by dialing 911 and how to contact a known family member or responsible trustworthy neighbor or adult should an emergency arise.

Check your child's route to and from school. Call attention to any dangerous spots such as vacant lots, alleyways, etc. Advise them what to do if a strange person follows or approaches them.

Instruct your child's school to notify you immediately if your child is absent. Inform the principal who is authorized to pick your child up from school. Try to have the same person pick your child up every day when possible.

Instruct your child to never take a ride from any strangers even if the person says that they are there to pick them up because their mom or dad sent them.

Choose a secret code word to use with your child in case of an emergency. Tell your child never to go with anyone who does not know this code word.

Advise your child what to do if they feel lost. Help them to identify the safest place to go or person to ask for help in reuniting them with you or other caregiver. Examples of safe helpers could be a uniformed law-enforcement or security officer, store salesperson with a name-tag, person with a nametag who is working at the information booth.

Teach your child to tell you if anyone asks them to keep a secret, offer them gifts or money, or asks to take their picture.

Teach your child to always tell you if something happened while they were away from you that made them feel uncomfortable in anyway.

Meet the New Board Members

During the Forest Pond Annual HOA Meeting, an election of Board of Directors was conducted by the attending homeowners.

It was started off by the HOA President, Mehl Renner, stating that he would continue on as a member and President if accepted. Dover Sifers-Putman, Secretary, was next reaffirming her standing if accepted. John Vojtko, Treasurer, also stood up and announced that he would like to continue serving on the Board of Directors.

One current member, yours truly, had to withdraw from the Board due to new requirements based on my new duties at my place of employment. I will continue to serve as the Editor of the Forest Pond Newsletter. Then the new volunteer members each stood up in turn and offered their services for the betterment of

the community. So the following information is shared as required by the laws of the state of North Carolina:

President Mehl Renner; 6105 Spring Flower Court and he is also the Chairman of the Architectural Standards Committee.

Secretary Dove Sifers-Putman; 6104 Spring Flower Court; she is a board member on the National Association of Women in Construction.

Treasurer, John Vojtko; 6524 Spanish Moss Lane; John's desire to see things grow will benefit the community well.

The following are Members-At-Large:

Edmon Hullings; 6204 Moss Bank Court.

Jeannette B Moss; 6200 Moss Bank Court.

Mike Wells; 6213 Nevin Road; he has

lived here only for a few months but wants to be involved.

Ryan Knepshield; 6215 Moss Bank Court; he has already been involved with the Board prior to getting fully moved and settled in.

Michael Cummings; 6327 Pink Dogwood Lane; he is a custom contractor building houses and remodeling them.

The next move for the Board of Directors is to establish their duties and responsibilities and that will be in the next Board Meeting which is a closed meeting to the public.

The Board must elect their officers and assign their own committees, establish their working network, and work out any special interests that may be a benefit to the neighborhood.