Notes from HOA President Fred Stewart

Thank You for Your Support

On behalf of the Forest Ridge Homeowners Association Board of Directors, a thank you to all of our homeowners for their continued support throughout the year. Your suggestions and comments are important to facilitate our forward direction. We look forward to working with homeowners to continue to make Forest Ridge a desirable community in which to live as well as a preferred destination for potential new homeowners. Thanks again for your support.

FRHOA Improvements to Better Serve Our Homeowners

The Board is always looking for ways to improve our services and to conserve financial resources. Our 2022 FRHOA annual dues are a good value, in my opinion, at $141 per year.

The mailing twice-yearly of our hardcopy newsletter has been a significant cost item over the years. After several discussions over a period of a couple of years we decided (voted approval) to change the spring newsletter to this electronic version. This saves significant printing and mailing cost. The spring newsletter will be emailed to all FRHOA members for whom we have email addresses. If you are not sure if we have your email address, please send it along with your name (owners name) to info@forest-ridge.org. In addition to the emailing, the newsletter will be posted on our website accessible to everyone www.forest-ridge.org. Our FRHOA fall newsletter will continue to be hardcopy mailed to each homeowners' address via the U.S. postal system to ensure distribution of annual election and proxy information.

Limited Display of Political Signs Etc.

Every year there are elections, annual holidays, special events etc. If you have lived in Forest Ridge for a while you have noticed political signs in some yards during the election season. Our FRHOA Covenants prohibit the display of most signs including political signs. With our lawyer’s input, the Board developed and approved a “resolution” to allow homeowners to display political signs in their yards 60 days before an election and remove them no later than 10 days after the date of any federal, state, or local election. Decorations during the holiday season have been a part of our community since it was built. In fact, we have an annual competition for holiday decorating each December with a modest reward for the top three. It’s never too early to plan to compete in 2022. With all that said all December seasonal decorations including ones hung on gutters should be removed by now. Thanks!

Sheds

The FRHOA does not allow, by covenant, detached sheds. Our Covenants allow for one structure on each lot with that structure being a single-family home. Attached sheds are approved on a case-by-case basis. Over the years we have denied ACC applications for detached sheds. Recently, homeowners have again requested detached sheds. Our covenants must be modified to allow a detached shed. In order to do that the Board must have signatures to pursue a covenant modification from 75 percent of all homeowners. Seventy five percent of our 550 homeowners is 413. The signatures must be from homeowners, not renters. Our annual assessment mailing December 1, 2021 included a ballot for the homeowner to vote Yes or No as to whether the Board should pursue amending the Covenants to include sheds. Many factors need to be considered, if this were to move forward, including but not limited to: size; architecture; color, structure composition; electric power, placement on lot, Loudoun County regs, etc. The cutoff to mail in your vote is May 1, 2022.

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Notes from HOA President Fred Stewart

Become Involved in Your HOA

The FRHOA is composed of volunteers. All of us work full or part time. We are always looking for interested homeowners to volunteer to help. A good way to become involved is to attend the monthly FHROA Board meetings which are held the first Thursday of each month except for July. These meetings are held at 7:30 PM in the Eastern Loudoun County Sheriff’s office 46620 E. Frederick Drive, Sterling, VA. Attendance via ZOOM is also available.

Information on the FRHOA can be accessed anytime by going to our website at www.forest-ridge.org. On our website you can find the minutes of recent meetings, our By-laws, our recent newsletters, a listing of the Board of Directors, all of our important documents, our Architectural Control Committee (ACC) Regulations and our ACC Architectural Change Form, which must be filled out and submitted before making any changes, including color changes, to the exterior of your home for decks, driveways, fences, shingles, shutters, siding and swimming pools. We always welcome additional volunteers. Currently the Board has a need for a secretary to produce minutes of each monthly meeting. Come join us in person or via ZOOM, help make a difference in your community.

Fred Stewart, President FRHOA

Reminder to everyone:
Forest Ridge Architectural Control Committee

Spring and summer have in past years been busy times for the Homeowner Association (HOA) Architectural Control Committee (ACC) members. The majority of time spent by the volunteers is completing resale inspections for properties going on the market and reviewing ACC Change Requests for homeowners looking to repair, replace, or update the exteriors of their homes, decks, and fences during the favorable weather conditions of summer.

For homeowners looking to put a property on the market, be sure not to overlook the exterior of the property when readying it for sale. The HOA is required to conduct a review of the condition of the exterior of the property and note any damaged, dirty, or missing elements of the exterior of the house, deck, fence, or driveway that is out of compliance with the HOA's Covenants. Most common violations found include algae on exterior walls and decks, cracked and crumbling driveways, missing window screens or shutters, broken or badly deteriorated fencing, peeling and chipped paint on trim and doors.

So, plan ahead to tackle anything that would detract from the look of the exterior of the structure to ensure a "clean" resale certification. The ACC will only inspect a property once, so any violation(s) found during inspection will be listed on the resale certification for the buyer. All violations found during a home resale inspection that are not remedied by the closing date for the property convey to the new owner(s) and are required to be corrected within 30 days by the new owner. For those planning to sell their property, please notify the HOA's resale coordinator at resale@forest-ridge.org and resale.packets@forest-ridge.org directly or via a realtor.

The HOA Covenants allow the ACC 30 days to review a Change Request. However, the ACC handled most requests this past year within about two weeks from the time the ACC begins the review of the change request. The ACC this past year approved all change requests and none required modification to meet HOA guidelines. To speed the review process, applications must include all details and supporting documents such as styles, colors, locations, as well as plats for fences, deck enlargements, fire pits, and patios. The Architectural Change Application can be found on the Forest Ridge website at http://www.forest-ridge.org/acc/architecturalchangeform.html.

Change Requests can be submitted to the ACC email box: ACC@forest-ridge.org in PDF format only or the Forest Ridge HOA P.O Box. 493, Sterling, VA 20164. Please include a contact email address in case the ACC needs clarification or additional details regarding the proposed changes. Please note that no changes can be made prior to ACC approval and that the ACC cannot start its review until all necessary details/samples for the proposed change are submitted to the committee.

The HOA/ACC does not need to be contacted for general landscaping or tree trimming/cutting within an owner's property. Please avoid plantings that will crowd sidewalks or block line of sight along our streets. As a reminder, the common areas are for the enjoyment of all HOA members and should not to be used to dump yard waste from an owner’s property or used as an area to discard old Christmas trees.

As always please reach out to the ACC at the Monthly Board meeting or via email for any questions regarding changes under consideration.
Renovated Sterling Community Center Opens!

Loudoun County’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) hosted a ribbon cutting and open house on March 5 and 6, 2022.

The renovation raised the split-level building to a single level, provides for new outdoor spaces and brings the facility standards up to date.

120 Enterprise St, Sterling, VA 20164

Features of the center include a public lobby, fitness room, computer room, kitchen, teen gaming room, classrooms and an art room.

Sterling Library
https://library.loudoun.gov/Sterling

22330 S Sterling Blvd, Sterling, VA 20164

Monday - Friday: 9:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday: 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: noon - 5 p.m.

- Virtual and in-person story times morning, afternoons, and evenings
- Public computers connected to a black and white printer
- Free notary services
- The makerspace is open during regular hours: 3D printers; Sewing machines; embroidery machine; music editing software; Laminator machine; Digitization equipment and more
- Dedicated teen area includes a video gaming section as well as space for crafts and study groups.

There are many little ways to enlarge your child’s world. Love of books is the best of all.

Gus Goes Green: A Planet Earth Adventure
Sterling Library 4/16/2022 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM
Celebrate Earth Day with a giant dog puppet named Gus who leads you on an adventure around the globe.
Forest Ridge Trees and Common Areas

Last year the FRHOA spent a total of $19,610.00 for tree removal and upkeep of the common areas within our neighborhood. We cut down a total of 55 dead trees, a couple of which were very dangerous. So far this year, we have spent $5,710.00 to cut 11 trees. Many of those trees were identified by homeowners and reported to us through the email addresses below. If you see a dangerous tree, please let us know so we can address it. Basically, our policy is that if it’s dangerous or it could fall and damage private property, we take it down. If it’s standing dead and away from private property, we leave it for the woodpeckers.

We can probably all agree that the beauty of the common wooded areas is a major attraction for our neighborhood. We ask you to please help clean it up by picking up the trash that you find in the common area behind your home, along the streets, or in the storm ditches. It is a good time to do this as the poison ivy is down and leaves are off so visibility is good. It really is pretty amazing how much trash blows into the woods.

We had a Neighborhood clean-up effort scheduled for Saturday, March 12, which was switched to March 19 due to the snowstorm that day. We wanted to write about the effort and include it here but the deadline was just too early. We will summarize the work done and include it with our next monthly HOA meeting notes.

Contact the Trees and Common Area Chairman at: trees@forest-ridge.org or commonarea@forest-ridge.org

Here are the winners of the 2021 Holiday Lighting Contest:

1st place Willie and Phyllis Brown 114 Yew Court
2nd Place Susan Guerin 210 Autumn Olive Way
3rd Place Brian and Andrea Rothgeb 110 Almond Court

Congratulations to the winners!
Thanks for making the neighborhood sparkle.
The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the FRHOA Board.

Is this the future of Forest Ridge if sheds are allowed?

Are you outgrowing your home? Is it full of stuff? You move stuff from the house to the garage and now the garage is full and you think “Boy, a shed would be nice.” You check your HOA docs and research the cost of building a shed and realize you need to scale down your vision of a shed. Several thousand dollars wasn’t in your vision. The shed goes up and then, sooner or later, becomes filled to the brim with stuff. Stuff starts to accumulate around it and attached to it. Now it’s a violation. But, no worry. It’s just a shed. A skunk takes up residency beneath the shed. You notice the shed is leaning and the doors no longer latch properly. It’s sadly in need of paint and the roof needs repair. Again, in violation. But, no worry. Only my neighbor can see it. It’s just a shed. Your neighbor puts their house on the market for sale and your shed is clearly visible from their property. You always intended to screen it from them, but never got around to it. The neighbor receives comment after comment from perspective buyers about the unsightly, ugly shed next door. The neighbor complains and you ignore them. The house sits on the market and finally sells for far less than its value. The negative visuals of sheds will impact neighbors and conflicts will arise. But, no worry. It’s just a shed.

More and more homeowners start adding a shed to their property. Many skip the HOA approval process and county regulations. Proper permits, placement, size and color are ignored resulting in an excessive number of violations. This could necessitate an increase in assessments necessary to cover the additional funds needed to cover violation letters, lawyer fees and court costs. The process to correct violations can be long and costly. But, no worry. It’s just a shed.

As the appearance of the neighborhood drops so does its value. First impressions count for a lot in home selection. Imagine driving along a street, where the backyards are on display, viewing poorly designed, neglected sheds. These will stand out like a sore thumb; damaging curb appeal and the character of our beautiful community will be destroyed. But, no worry. It’s just a shed.
Loudoun County will host two pit stops for participants of Bike to Work Day to be held on Friday, May 20, 2022. This annual event celebrates a healthy and fun way to get to work at 100 different pit stops throughout the Washington metropolitan region. Participants will ride to a pit stop, pick-up free t-shirts and giveaways, and enjoy refreshments before beginning their workday.

Adults planning to participate in this free event are encouraged to register online to pick up a T-shirt at one of the Loudoun County pit stops. Both pit stops are adjacent to the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail:

- Leesburg at Raflo Park on Harrison Street, 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
- Sterling, just east of Route 28, at Ruritan Road behind Northrop Grumman, 6:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Bike to Work Day is coordinated regionally by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and Commuter Connections and is held rain or shine. The annual event attracts thousands of cyclists in the region. The local festivities are planned by Loudoun County Commuter Services.

Find details and a link to register at [loudoun.gov/BiketoWork](http://loudoun.gov/BiketoWork).

Here are some Facebook Groups you may be interested in joining:

**Sterling Park Neighborhood Exchange**
This group is for Sterling, VA and Sterling area neighbors to get local news, share information, events, celebrations, fundraisers, interests, news, weather and safety concerns that affect and unite our hometown community. Buying, selling and politics are NOT allowed. General yard & garage sale posts, home rentals/listings and fundraisers (but not GoFundMe's) are allowed. Advertising is allowed only once a month - thy notice when it's more. To join the group, you must answer 3 questions.

**Forest Ridge Community Group (Sterling/Herndon)**
NOT CREATED OR MAINTAINED BY THE FRHOA
This group was created for the residents of the Forest Ridge Community located in Sterling and Herndon, Va. to have an opportunity to share information on current events within our local area, celebrations, fundraisers, interests, news, weather and safety concerns that affect our community. To join the group, you must answer 3 questions.
MEETING INFORMATION
Meetings are held at Eastern Loudoun Sheriff’s Station ACC
Meetings: First Thursday of every month @ 7:00 PM Board
Meetings: First Thursday of every month @ 7:30 PM
NO MEETING IN JULY
(Meeting dates, locations and times are subject to change.)
All homeowners are invited to attend.

"The energy of the earth flows through the veins of springtime." ~Terri Guillemets

Forest Ridge Neighborhood Contact Information

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<td><a href="mailto:info@forest-ridge.org">info@forest-ridge.org</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@forest-ridge.org">info@forest-ridge.org</a></td>
<td>Subscribe to the FRHOA e-mail distribution list</td>
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Newsletter Information

Homeowner FOR SALE classified ads are free. The newsletter is distributed to all owners within the Forest Ridge development. The FRHOA Board reserves the right to reject any ad, article, or classified. Editor: Juanita Easton

The FRHOA Newsletter is published twice a year: emailed to residents around April 1st and printed/mailed out around September 1st. To place an ad, submit an article or comment, send an email to news@forest-ridge.org.

Business Advertisements:
Full Page - $100
Half Page - $50
Quarter Page - $25
Business Card - $15

(703) 383-VDOT (8368)