



COMMUNICATIONS

Web Site
www.AshbrookCommunity.org is going to be enhanced and kept current so that you can use it as a tool for both information and access to important documents and posting of information. **Charlie Cain** is the web administrator and is dedicated to enhancing this site for the benefit of all.

Yahoo Groups
There are several yahoo groups that are open to all homeowners and residents alike. Log onto www.ashbrook@yahoo.com ... click on Groups ... type in Ashbrook under Search and you will find Ashbrook Womens and Ashbrook Homeowners groups.

Newsletter
Published in January – April – July and October. We'd love to receive articles, comments, advertisements, etc. from homeowners to include in these Newsletters. A section can be set aside for: Babysitters, Lawn Care, Dog Walkers, For Sale, Help Wanted, Etc.

KIDS!
Send us your funniest story, picture, joke, drawing, etc. and we will publish them in our next Newsletter (*room permitting*) .. make sure you include your name and age!

MOMS!
Do you have a special recipe you would like to share with your neighbors? Perhaps something that is unique to your culture or homeland.

DADS!
Know of any maintenance tips you would like to share for those less "talented" in that area? Found any surprises in your house that you think might pertain to other homeowners you would like to pass on?

Please mail, fax, or email your contributions to MMI by March 15th and it will be given consideration to be published in the next Newsletter.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEWS

ARCH Reviews continue ... even throughout the winter. Emphasis will not be on lawn care issues (*phew!*) but on other issues that have not been addressed for a while. The priority for the coming months will be **SATELLITE DISHES**.

With the recent installation of FIOS in the community, fewer people are using their satellite dish and can / should remove them. These little silver circular steel mushrooms are an eyesore of the worst kind! We long for the day when technology reduces them to the size of a

pencil eraser!
Not every homeowner has FIOS, however, and they prefer to keep satellite service. That's fine ... you are free to do so. **HOWEVER**, your governing documents state that (1) you must have a letter of approval from the ARCH Committee and (2) your dish may only be placed on the rear of the roof. They cannot be attached to any other part of the house, they may not be on the ground (unless they are camouflaged by sufficient shrubs to make them *almost* invisible from the street).

ARE YOU RENTING YOUR HOME - OR A PORTION OF YOUR HOME?

If you are, please send us a copy of the lease for your records ... and your address where all Ashbrook correspondence can be sent. This is extremely important ... and it is required by the governing documents.

Did you know? When a homeowner applies for a mortgage we must certify to the

lender the number of homes that are rented in the community? We must also certify how much money the Association has set aside for Reserves and how many homeowners are delinquent, and by how much. This information has an effect on whether a loan will be written and the interest rate charged. Your guidelines state

They cannot exceed more than 1 meter in size.
If you have not received a letter of approval ... if your dish is not installed according to the guidelines, please take the initiative and get it done before MMI sends you a letter of violation.
Other issues that MMI will be looking for are:
Window blinds that are broken.
Outdoor landscaping lights for which applications have not been received.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Firstly, a tremendous thank you to Marisa Shea, Jennifer Crawford, Val Valdez, AND their husbands for their tireless service to the Social Committee over the past few years. It is with great regret that we now say goodbye to these valuable committee members, as they pursue other endeavors.

We wish you all the best!
If you have enjoyed past events in the community, such as the summer BBQ at the pool, the Halloween parade and festival, or the holiday hayride and would like to see events like these continue...

There is no one to plan events for 2009 ... this is a committee that needs new volunteers. Please email MMI immediately if you have an interest in serving your community by planning social events. Without you, the streets will be quiet this year.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

PARKING AND CURB PAINTING

In early Spring – when the weather dries out – we will be painting the curbs yellow along Seneca Square so that parking is restricted to one side of the street on each side of the island.

The parking spaces are marked, however, people are parking their cars on both sides. This makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for emergency vehicles to drive down that

street.
Please do not park your vehicles in spots that are not marked for parking.

REMINDERS!

All outdoor holiday decorations must be removed by the end of January . We look forward to seeing them again next year!

Trash days: American Disposal picks up regular trash on Tuesday and regular trash, recyclables, yard waste on Fridays.

Homeowner Assessments: Are due on the first day of the month and considered late if payment is not received by the 15th. Late fee has increased to \$100 for each month a payment is late.



Winter 2009



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WINNERS OF THE HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST:

Single Family Homes:
Ryan and Marisa Shea,
44181 Navajo Drive

Townhomes:
Leonard and Kristin Granda,
44298 Pawnee Terrace

The Brook

Ashbrook Homeowners' Association Community Newsletter

Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!

So far we have enjoyed a mild winter ... but there are still 3 months to go! Better keep those snow shovels waxed and close by ... just in case!

Here are a couple of reminders to help get you thru until Spring:

- All single family section streets are plowed and sanded by VDOT.

Please be patient with them because neighborhood streets are 4th in line for attention and sometimes, depending on the storm, it can take 2 days before they get into a neighborhood.

- For the cul-de-sacs ... VDOT only makes one path in and out, they do not clean out the entire circle.

- It is a law that all residents in the single family sections must shovel the sidewalks in front and around their property. The town home sections will be shoveled by NOVA properties. This is important so the children can return to school as quickly as possible and avoid walking on the roads.

- Each homeowner is responsible for shoveling their lead walks and driveways ... should anyone fall and get hurt on your property, you are responsible and if the insurance company determines you were negligent, they may not cover your claim.

- Please do not put salt on any sidewalk ... this can cause serious damage to the concrete by pitting it, allowing water to penetrate and with freezing,

thawing, can do serious damage. The newest de-icing salt is magnesium chloride. It continues to melt snow and ice until the temperature reaches -13°F. This salt releases about 40 % less chlorides into the environment than either rock salt or calcium chloride.

It is also less damaging to concrete surfaces of questionable or unknown quality. Magnesium chloride is less toxic to plants, trees and shrubs. It also does not leave a powder residue when tracked into your home.

- Make sure your mailbox is kept free of snow or the mail carrier may not be able to deliver your mail.

- Wax your shovel well before starting to dig thru ... this will prevent the snow from caking on your blade, making each shovel-full heavier. It's easier on your back.

- AND, by all means, don't try to be superhuman! Pace yourself and be careful ... shoveling snow is extremely hard on anybody ... young or old.

- HELP out a neighbor that might be having difficulty cleaning off a driveway ... your good deed will come!

- LASTLY ... IF we are lucky enough to get some substantial snow, *ENJOY IT!* Fix a fire in the fireplace, a warm cup of hot chocolate and **Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!**

Who's going to plow ?

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has accepted the Ashbrook Streets into their system for maintenance; therefore, they will plow and salt the streets in the single family sections, should it snow. Please be patient ... neighborhood streets are 4th in line for service during a snowfall.

NOVA Properties will plow the streets within the townhouse section. Once the snow reaches 2" on the ground, the trucks should arrive to begin plowing. Please remove as many cars as possible from the streets during a snowfall ... pull them up into the driveways and garages. This will enable the trucks to do a better job in clearing the roads ... your car won't get plowed in or damaged ... and you'll have LESS snow to shovel from the driveway! *A win – win!*

SNOWMAN CONTEST



Following the **The first snowfall of 6" or more** ... the person(s) who build the most creative *SNOW PERSON* will be awarded a gift certificate from Starbucks ... for that *perrrfect* cup of hot chocolate.

MMI will judge the competition two days after the snow stops falling.

Good luck!



Ashbrook Homeowners' Association
Community Contacts

Millenium Management, Inc

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 Ashburn, VA 20148

Board of Directors

President Carol Pearson
 Vice President Peter Karlak
 Secretary Marla Regan
 Treasurer Rob Kerr
 Member at Large Daren Magness
 Member at Large Jon Thomasberg
 Member at Large Amit Khare

Architectoral Control Committee

Chairperson: Juan Valdez

Communications Committee

Chairperson: Carol Pearson

Landscape Committee

Chairperson: Juan Valdez

Neighborhood Watch

Chairperson: Marla Regan

Pool Committee

Chairperson: Kim Browning

Social Committee

Chairperson: Position Vacant

Local Phone Numbers

Emergency

911

Police, Non-Emergency

703.777.1021

Poison Control

703.698.3600

Inova Loudoun Hospital

703.858.6000

Public Library

703.737.8100

Loudoun Co. Animal Control

540.882.3211

American Disposal

703.368.0500

Virginia Power

703.934.9660

Washington Gas

703.750.1000

Columbia Gas

800.440.6111

MISS Utility

2009 BUDGET

The 2009 has been approved and passed by the Board of Directors (BOD) and copies were mailed to all homeowners, along with new payment coupons/envelopes. An explanation of the new

GOLDS' GYM

In 2005 a proposal was placed before the Ashbrook HOA to enter into an agreement with Gold's Gym for a reduced rate membership. After much discussion, informational meetings, and votes, the Majority of those who participated voted to approve a 15-year contract with Gold's Gym. The rates were to gradually increase over a 3-year period with the final increase due in May 2009. This increase is reflected in the budget and contributes to the increase in assessments.

There has been some recent discussion from homeowners regarding this contract. Obviously there's been a

HOMEOWNER DELINQUENCIES

A significant portion of the increase is due to assessment delinquencies. Ashbrook has an annual budget of \$410,000. Almost 8% of the budget is uncollected ... averaging \$32,000 ... 32% of the homeowners (*data as of end of Oct 2008*).

We have at least 3 homes that are in foreclosure and 2 that have filed bankrupt. In a bankruptcy, the Association rarely is able to collect any of the assessments owed. In a foreclosure, only the amount that is owed ONCE the bank takes over is collectible ... past due amounts cannot be collected.

69 homeowners are 90 days or less delinquent

30 homeowners are 90 days or more delinquent

It is the policy of the BOD and MMI that once an

budget was also attached, explaining the increase in assessments.

At the January 5th BOD meeting, approximately 45 homeowners came to discuss the new budget and the

change in the economic climate since 2005 resulting in further mixed opinions.

The BOD is in the process of determining the following:

How many households are members of the gym?

How many of those households are actually using the gym?

Should the Association wish to cancel the contract with Gold's Gym, is it possible and what would the termination fee be?

Can the Association renegotiate the contract?

Once we have this information, we will hold another Town Hall meeting to

account becomes 60 days overdue, a letter of demand is sent to the homeowners giving them 10 days to bring the account current. If they do not, then the account is turned over to our collection attorney, Mercer Trigiani for legal action. They also send a demand letter – file a lien against the property – obtain a judgment against the homeowner, in that order. We are now requesting that more aggressive measures be taken such as garnishment of wages.

In addition, to help deter the number of late payments, the BOD has increased the late fee to \$100. We must get the attention of those who do not pay their assessments on time as this has a significant impact on being able to pay our bills on time. To provide an additional incentive, the BOD has agreed to offer the

increase. MMI went thru each line and explained any changes from 2008. While no one is "happy" that the assessments had to go up, we believe almost everyone understands the rationale.

present the facts and options, and let the membership decide the future of the Gold's Gym contract. This will not affect the assessments for this year; however.

Gold's Gym identified 187 homeowners as being members of the gym. MMI sent each homeowner a letter, asking them to certify that this information was correct. Only 89 homeowners responded, and 20 of them said they were not members. Ninety-eight (98) homeowners did not respond. We've sent them a second request asking for them to certify if they are members and hopefully more will respond.

following:

If you are late with an assessment and have been charged a \$100 late fee ... we will forgive \$50 of that late fee IF you enroll in the ACH program (automatic debit). If at any time your ACH payment is not honored by the bank, or if you cancel your enrollment, then any funds rebated will be charged back to your account. The ACH form was provided with your coupons and it is also available on the web site.

The same offer hold true to anyone else who is delinquent. IF you sign up for the ACH program before the 2nd quarter (April 1st) we will forgive ½ of all late fees charged to your account.

This offer does not apply to any account that has been turned over to collections.

ASHBROOK COMMERCIAL OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Another contributing factor to the assessment increase is the annual fee the Association must pay to the Ashbrook Commercial Owners' Association as part of the Easement and Maintenance

Agreement. This fee covers snow removal, site lighting, trash removal, wetlands monitoring and lawn maintenance along the Russell Branch corridor. This fee increased significantly

LANDSCAPING CONTRACTOR

The BOD has decided to hire **Tru-Green Lawncare** to provide landscaping services to Ashbrook this year. While the previous contractor, Landscaping Services, did an adequate job for the last few years, the Board feels that Tru-Green will take a different approach that will make a tangible difference in the common elements.

Tru-Greens priority will be to

improve the appearance of the turf through aerating, over-seeding, fertilization, weed control, etc.

For the first year, most of this effort will be at the front of the property to improve curb appeal. The back of the property, along the trail, will be maintained through cutting and trimming and basic fertilization.

TOWN HOUSE LAWN MAINTENANCE

As part of the overall plan for improving the appearance of the Ashbrook Community, the BOD has approved a contract with Tru-Green that will provide lawn care for the town homes. This will include a Spring Clean-Up which covers: Cleaning of beds and trees, trimming of shrubs, removal of weeds, trenching around beds and trees, fresh mulch,

TREES

It is very common to find, after a community is developed, that some of the trees have become weakened and die. The BOD has asked that an arborist come and evaluate all common area

BOND RELEASE

Richmond American has notified the BOD that the streets have now been accepted into the VDOT road system and will not be maintained by the State. Board representatives walked the entire community with Darla Alexander from R.A. and a representative from

fertilization, weed control and mulching between driveways. Following that there will be mowing, trimming, edging performed every 7-10 days. Homeowners will have to water the lawns ... this will not be provided by Tru Green.

Important to know:

Homeowners who have installed rock or grass in the area between their driveways

perimeter trees to determine their stability. **Care of Trees** will be on the property during the month of January to review all such trees and provide a report to the BOD identifying which trees must

Loudoun County and identified several things that still needing completion:

Patching of cracks in the trail system.

Signage down by Lumbee stating there is a dangerous drop off. (*The fence could not be extended because of an*

over 2008. Merritt Properties manages this Association which includes Ashbrook HOA, the retail center and the office condominiums.

As time and funds allow, many of the small trees throughout the property may be relocated to provide for a more aesthetic design and to thin out trees that were planted too close together.

The overall plan cannot be completed in one year . We have a 3-5 year plan for the common elements so please be patient as we work toward that goal.

will not have that altered ... no mulch applied.

Decorative borders in front of flower beds will not be removed; however, borders along the sidewalk and trees much be removed to allow for weekly maintenance.

The cost for this service is \$20 per month and is included in the monthly assessment for town home owners only.

be removed to prevent possible property damage. Funds have been allocated in the budget to provide for removal of these trees.

LCSA easement.)

Reseeding behind some homes on Navajo.

Once we have confirmed that these issues have been completed, the BOD will sign off on release of the performance bond.

BOARD MEETINGS

The BOD meets the first Monday of each month. Meetings are held at Gold's Gym and begin at 7:30 pm. This meeting is set aside to conduct the business of the Association, discuss projects that are on-going, review contract performance, review any maintenance issues that need attention, plan for upcoming events, etc.

Ashbrook is a Corporation and these business meetings are conducted in a professional manner, doing the business of the Corporation.

There is a time set aside before each meeting begins for homeowners to bring their issues, concerns, comments, etc., to the Board. They can ask questions, inform the Board of an issue that needs to be addressed ... anything that concerns the overall community.

If you are unable to attend a meeting but wish to bring something to the Board's attention, you may either fax or email your information to MMI and it will be presented to the Board as you prepared it.

Homeowners are invited and encouraged to attend these monthly business meetings. It is important that you be aware of what is going on within your Community. At the January 5th meeting, the Board appointed Jon Thomasberg and Amit Khare to serve on the Board as At Large members, both own town homes and have agreed to serve as representatives.

The Agenda for each month's meeting will be sent out via the AENS to homeowners who have provided their email address. It will also be posted on the yahoo group and the web site.

Within a week or so, the minutes from that meeting will also be posted on the yahoo group and the web site so you can review actions taken by the Board.

The Association is required to hold one meeting a year for the membership (all homeowners) and the purpose of that meeting is to elect members to the Board of Directors. As the need arises, additional "Town Hall" meetings will be held to discuss issues that are important to the entire community so the Board can get homeowner feedback before making a decision. The Gold's Gym contract is one such issue that the Board will not act on without receiving homeowner feedback.