



Homeowners' Association Newsletter

March, 2016

Annual Meeting Update

The Annual Homeowners Meeting took place January 19th. Thank you to all homeowners who sent in their proxies and especially those who were able to attend in person! Unfortunately, we did not receive enough proxy votes to form a quorum at the annual meeting, so the meeting was canceled and rescheduled to February 8th. The February meeting occurred in conjunction with a scheduled HOA board meeting, but there were still not enough votes to establish a quorum. **The annual meeting has therefore been rescheduled to March 14th 7:00 pm at Brookdale.**

To establish a quorum for the annual meeting the Home Owners Association (HOA) by-laws require 60% of the voting membership (115 members) for the first meeting; for subsequent meetings 50% of any previous meeting is required. Meetings are rescheduled until a quorum is reached. At the second meeting there were approximately 25 members either present or by proxy, so we do expect to establish a quorum at the March meeting.

The main emphasis of the annual meeting is to close-out 2015 financial activities, review Architectural Control Committee (ACC) inspection results, establish goals for the HOA for 2016, and consider a proposal to revise the 2010 HOA Rules and Regulations to be more explicit on several key

items. In addition to the agenda items, the HOA also has vacancies on the Board of Directors for two positions. Within the annual meeting notice packet nomination forms were provided for the board positions. We highly encourage homeowners to nominate qualified and interested candidates for the open positions, as the current board members have volunteered their time for several years. One of the positions will be a one-year term, and the second position will be a three-year term.

HOA Board Meeting Update

The HOA Board has been very active since last fall on several high priority topics for the association, and we have now had several homeowners volunteer to fill vacant HOA positions. There has also been a change in Association Managers at Windermere Property Management. We would like to welcome Jeanmarie Trapp to the association, and we look forward to working with her as activity within the HOA begins to pick-up. Welcome Jeanmarie! See below for Jeanmarie's contact information.

Laurie Ortman was nominated as Treasurer of the HOA, and the board approved Laurie's nomination. The Treasurer will be responsible for the financial dealings of the HOA as defined in the association by-laws. Jeff Weight has volunteered to become the HOA's webmaster.



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Jeff's initial focus will be on updating contact information and links in the current website. The longer term focus will be on transitioning the website to a new platform that is easier to maintain, and ensure that the new website is readily accessible from all digital devices. Angie Crittenden has volunteered to organize special HOA projects such as trail and common area maintenance, garbage pick-ups, and entrance sign and flower bed maintenance. If you have any ideas for special projects, please pass them to Angie at gacrit@hotmail.com. Thank you Laurie, Jeff, and Angie for filling these critical positions for the HOA!

The last several board meetings have seen very positive attendance from homeowners, where the discussions were on the near-term emphasis of completing the tot-lot project and common area maintenance. The tot-lot started last year with the successful removal of the old playground equipment (Phase I). Phase II is now split into a fall and spring phase, and the emphasis is on returning the entire area back to its natural state. We are taking input on the spring phase and are currently negotiating contracts with the landscaping company. The original single-phase approach initially came in well beyond estimated levels; and the fall planting may not be sufficient for completing the project.

The common area maintenance has been focused on identifying and removing trees that could be affected by fall and winter storms. Several homeowners have volunteered to form a task group to focus on this task, and negotiations are currently underway with four tree removal companies. We expect to begin tree removal in the coming weeks. We would like to specifically recognize Rob Iwamoto and Steve Ortman for taking the lead on the common areas task group. They have put together a very clear and comprehensive plan that addresses the management of trees in the HOA common areas in two phases. The first phase will address those trees that require immediate

removal; the second phase will be focused on a proactive common areas maintenance plan. Rob and Steve, thanks again for all the hard work, as projects like these cannot be accomplished without HOA volunteers!

It is extremely critical that the HOA effectively manages the common areas that we are responsible for. Managing common areas will require some level of effort from homeowner volunteers, or it will be very costly to the HOA. Being proactive in the maintenance of our common areas will ensure that we are prepared for large storms, it will reduce financial risks to the HOA, and it will reduce the potential damaging effects of trees and limbs falling during storms.

Again, a big thanks to the folks that have volunteered to support the HOA tasks! These tasks will maintain the standards that the Mill Creek Highlands homeowners are accustomed to. Doing tasks with association membership is also a good way to build relationships with your neighbors, maintain the value in the Mill Creek Highlands, and save money for the HOA. **The HOA is currently in need of a Landscaping and Common Areas Officer. Please contact Jeanmarie if you are interested or have any questions!**

The Board of Directors has also been debating a transition to the Mill Creek Community Association (MCCA), and for core functions that are required by the by-laws, CC&Rs (covenants), and rules and regulations. The HOA's Board of Directors has not had sufficient homeowner participation to maintain core functions, so alternatives to the current association are being considered. Joining the MCCA will also come at a price to Mill Creek Highlands' homeowners, with anticipated annual dues that could be as much as twice the current dues. The Board of Directors is giving this subject careful consideration and invites comments from homeowners, as well. With the new volunteers taking vacant positions it is becoming less likely that we could continue to consider a merger with the MCCA. As a



reminder, the HOA relies on community volunteers for all of its functions, and if there is sufficient participation from the membership the level of effort will not be significant. With insufficient support the level of effort for those that do volunteer becomes unsustainable. So please, support your HOA and contribute to keeping the Mill Creek Highlands the great neighborhood that we've all come to expect and enjoy!

2016 HOA Meeting Schedule

HOA Board meetings are conducted on the second Monday of every other month at Brookdale Mill Creek at 7pm (14905 Bothell Everett Highway). **The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will take place Monday, April 18th.** All homeowners are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Regular ACC Inspections Beginning Next Month

While the HOA Rules and Regulations on yard and exterior home maintenance are always in effect, springtime is when the regular ACC inspections resume. The Architectural Control Committee (ACC) inspections are scheduled to start in March and will continue on a monthly basis. Now is a good time to review the CC&Rs and the Rules and Regulations as they apply to yards and exterior home maintenance. Both the CC&Rs and the Rules and Regulation can be found at the Mill Creek Highlands HOA website (www.millcreekhighlands.org)

The Rules and Regulations are in place to help ensure that the Mill Creek Highlands stay beautiful and well-maintained. There are many homeowners who have exceptional pride of ownership and for that, we say Thank You!

The initial emphasis on spring ACC inspections will be on lawns in need of edging, yard maintenance, excessive weeds and flowerbed maintenance, and driveway

cracks and edges. There were many homeowners that did full lawn replacements last year, and those lawns continue to look very good through the mild wet winter we have had. Moss will be out in full force this year, so plan to treat early!

New roof? New fence? Don't forget your ACC application!

All exterior work to your property needs approval by the Mill Creek Highlands ACC **prior** to beginning work. This includes siding, fences, decks, arbors, storage sheds, playhouses, gazebos, roofs, painting, and significant landscaping. See www.millcreekhighlands.org and the ACC tab to find more information and appropriate forms. If you have any questions, contact our property manager, Jeanmarie Trapp.

Questions? Comments?

It is no surprise that The Mill Creek Highlands is one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Mill Creek. We are blessed with beautiful surroundings, great schools, and caring neighbors.

What can the HOA do to make our neighborhood even better? Board members are open to questions, concerns and general ideas from all homeowners. Don't hesitate to put in your 2 cents! Please contact Jeanmarie outside of regularly scheduled board meetings if you have any ideas you would like to share.



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