



# AFTON GLEN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER – FALL 2007

### Executive Board

John Davies	President	703 440-8934 <a href="mailto:jedavies_8629@mac.com">jedavies_8629@mac.com</a>
David Buffington	Vice President	
Dan Sigg	Secretary	
Carol Ward	Treasurer	
Dennis Dombkowski	Newsletter editor	
Hal Neptune	Board Member	
Julio Abinader	Tri-State Management	703 591-2414

**MONTHLY MEETINGS.** The Board usually meets the third Wednesday of every month—check for postings on the gazebo and our web site at <http://members.cox.net/aftonglenweb>. All Afton Glen residents are welcome to attend the monthly meetings. If you can't attend but wish the Board to discuss a certain topic, call or send John Davies an e-mail, and we'll add the topic to our agenda.

### Recent Developments Regarding Parking Issues

Since the annual meeting in January, a lot has taken place concerning the parking situation with St. Raymond's.

Initially we had proposed—as an alternative to the “No Church Parking” signs, which VDOT made the church remove—to install signs that would create a “No Parking” restriction on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Gerry Hyland's office was very helpful in drafting a resolution for the Board of Supervisors to approve that limitation.

However, a week before the resolution was to be placed before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Afton Glen HOA Board received a request from a majority of those affected by the restriction (residents of Blue Jasmine Court) to drop the proposed change in favor of not having any new restrictions, but to get the existing parking laws enforced—no parking within 20 feet of an intersection, no blocking a driveway, and no parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant. Those residents recommended a permanent “no parking” area between Blue Jasmine Court and 8631 Groveland Drive, because of sight line problems at the curve, plus greater enforcement of the existing laws.

The Board discussed this proposal with pastor Father Gould, who supported the idea and offered to have the church mark (paint) the curbs and maintain the marking thereafter. The church will check with the county and VDOT on the marking. Father Gould said

the church would also check on the ability of the off-duty officer it hires for traffic control during Sunday services to exert a presence in the neighborhood and check on the parking, even if the officer could not issue a citation.

During this discussion, Father Gould also pointed out where he would like to open up additional parking, on church property behind the rectory near the retention pond. In a subsequent letter outlining the discussion, the HOA Board expressed support for this additional parking and urged the Arlington Diocese to approve the request. The church has agreed to continue publishing reminders to its parishioners on parking restrictions.

As expected, parking during the past few months—in the interim between major holydays—has not been a problem. Although we have not discussed the church's plans for the Christmas season with Father Gould, we have been told that the church is considering whether to add a fourth service on Christmas, which would be expected to spread out the traffic and parking volume. We'll continue to work with Father Gould and the Fairfax County Police Department to ensure the safety of Afton Glen residents.

### Koger Management Changes Name, Files for Chapter 11, Raises Fees

There have been several developments concerning Koger Management Group, which most of you know provides property management services under contract to the Afton Glen Homeowners Association. The company remains under state court supervision while an

investigation is completed into embezzlement that apparently affects the accounts of numerous homeowner associations. The items that follow will bring you up to date on a change in Koger's name and corporate structure; its filing for bankruptcy; our financial audit; and a change in Koger's fee for the state-mandated disclosure packet prepared for the sale of a home.

### ***Corporate Changes***

Koger has changed its name to Tri-State Management, and its current private owners will switch its corporate structure to employee ownership. In addition, the company has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection from creditors to allow it to continue to operate while it reorganizes. For now Koger/Tri-State is still providing the management services for which we contracted, but that could change depending on the outcome of our financial audit (see next item), or for other reasons. The board is continuing to monitor Koger/Tri-State's performance and to weigh other possible options for management services.

### ***Financial Audit***

Periodic audits of our financial records are important even under normal circumstances, but all the more so when there's a financial cloud over our property management firm. (So far we have not seen any evidence that Afton Glen has been affected.) After reviewing bids from a number of firms, we have hired an accounting firm to fully audit our 2006 financial records. The same firm audited our books for 2004 and is intimately familiar with the current situation, having conducted audits for other homeowner associations that contract with Koger/Tri-State.

### ***Higher Fee for Home Sale Disclosure Packet***

State law—specifically, The Virginia Property Owners' Association and Condominium Act—requires people belonging to a homeowners or condominium association to obtain a resale certificate (also called an estoppel certificate) from their association before they can sell their homes. The association must furnish, through its management company, a resale certificate within 14 days of receiving a written request for one. The owner or owner's agent must pay for the resale certificate when making the request.

The state-mandated cap on the fee for preparing the certificate and other resale documents used to be \$100. However, the General Assembly recently approved a new cap rate of \$325 for these documents, effective July 1, 2007. Koger has raised its fee for preparing this document package to \$245.

## ***Architectural Review Board Inspection Checklist***

Included with this newsletter is an important new document: the Architectural Review Board (ARB) Inspection Checklist. Please keep it handy so you can refer to it during your yard cleanup and home maintenance efforts. We have developed this checklist to serve two purposes:

- First, by distributing it now to all homeowners, we hope to provide you with some reminders of the most common types of things the ARB looks for, and the concerns that come up during the annual inspections. Please review the list to determine for yourself whether your house or property might need some corrective work. In fact, you might want to refer to it when you make your next visit to the hardware store, or when you're budgeting for your home improvement projects.
- Second, during the annual inspection of properties, the ARB will use the checklist as its report to you and notification of any needed action.

Remember that the checklist is not intended to be all-inclusive; occasionally an issue will arise that is not on the checklist but in the best judgment of the ARB requires some kind of action. Also, having an inspection free of any noted deficiencies is not a substitute for obtaining approval for your projects as required in the ARB Guidelines.

### ***Petty Thefts Are Cause for Reminder***

Although we are proud that Afton Glen has traditionally been a very safe and secure community, this is an opportune time for a reminder to use normal care in protecting your home and belongings.

Our neighborhood recently experienced a string of apparently connected petty thefts one weekend evening. Most of the items were taken from unlocked vehicles parked in driveways or on the street, and were things like loose change or small, easily grabbed objects. Before this incident, of course, residents from time to time have also had tools or other belongings disappear from unattended open garages.

So be alert, lock your doors and windows when you're away, follow ordinary precautions, and report suspicious behavior to the Fairfax County Police. Don't make it easy for someone to become a thief.

## ***New Home on the Web for Afton Glen Presence***

Our neighborhood has not had a highly developed web presence, but perhaps we can improve it a bit.

### ***New Web Address***

Many of you know that we have been using free server space hosted by Freeservers.com for an Afton Glen web site. Since we now have plenty of free server space available from our cable provider, and since we're way past our patience with all the Freeservers.com pop-up and banner ads, it seemed like it was time to move our web site to a less annoying environment. You can now find our web site at the address <http://members.cox.net/aftonglenweb>.

At least for now, this site is prepared by amateur volunteer effort, so it makes no claim to being anything special or sophisticated. All the same, we would like to make it as useful and interesting as we can, without incurring professional web design or hosting fees. Gradually, as time and talent allow, over the next several months we will devote more effort to beefing up this web site. So if you have any suggestions or ideas, or if you can volunteer web design time and talents on a regular basis, please send an e-mail to [aftonglenweb@cox.net](mailto:aftonglenweb@cox.net), or see the other "Contact Us" information on the web site.

### ***Koger/Tri-State Web Presence***

Residents can also access the web functions made available by our property management company at <http://www.tri-statemgmt.com>. At that web site, you can access your account information, using the account number and password that is shown on your most recent quarterly statement. We are investigating how much web functionality Tri-State can offer us under our existing fees, but we're reluctant to invest much additional time or resources, given the company's current state of affairs.

## ***Key Neighborhood Documents Available on the Web***

For your convenience, be advised that you can find the following key Afton Glen documents on our web site, under "Rules and Regulations":

- Afton Glen Homeowners Association Handbook—This contains the Architectural Review Board guidelines. It spells out rules and procedures for obtaining approval for modifications to property or homes, review criteria, enforcement procedures, and the various guidelines for property appearance and potential nuisances.

- The Architectural Review Board (ARB) Inspection Checklist—See previous news item describing the checklist.
- Architectural Improvement Request Form—This is the form you must use to obtain prior approval for architectural changes.
- Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions—This is an integral part of the deed for every home in the neighborhood. It outlines general property rights, restrictions, easements, and methods of enforcement.
- Afton Glen Homeowners Association Articles of Incorporation—This document established the association in Virginia in 1983. It outlines the association purpose, powers, membership, and authority.
- Afton Glen Homeowners Association Bylaws—This document is similar to the articles of incorporation and has some overlap, but it is more detailed regarding some items such as the Board of Directors, annual elections and meetings, procedures, and the like.

## ***Back to School Also Means Back to Good Safety Habits***

Now that summer is over and schools are in session, it's a good time to get back in the habit of safety on our neighborhood streets.

- Even if you're late for work and in a rush, please treat school buses with respect and courtesy, and observe state laws requiring you to stop and keep your distance when children are being picked up or dropped off.
- Watch out for kids darting across streets during pickup and drop-off hours.
- Please remind your children to act with caution when they are crossing streets, waiting at or being dropped off at bus stops, or getting dropped off from a friend's car.

## ***Construction Completed on Verizon Cell Tower***

We have not received any official notice, but it seems construction has been completed on the Verizon Wireless cell tower off Pohick Road near our neighborhood—that is, at least judging from the completed appearance of the tower, which is somewhat camouflaged to look like a tree.

Not only that, but it also seems the tower is actually operating, in view of the fact that the Verizon cellular signal has become noticeably stronger in many portions of our neighborhood. One resident reports "four bars"

of signal strength in the remotest corner of his basement, and an informal walk-about survey showed a strong signal on all sidewalks throughout the neighborhood.

However, some other residents have reported little improvement in their signal. If you've been waiting for the completion of the tower to consider switching cellular service providers, don't assume Verizon's signal will reach strongly into your home. Borrow a cell phone from someone with Verizon service and check the signal strength for yourself beforehand.

### **Another Recall of GE Dishwashers**

Some of you will remember that a few years ago, General Electric had a recall that applied to dishwashers installed as original appliances when the homes in Afton Glen were built. There is now another recall, but involving more recent appliance models.

In May, the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission and GE announced a recall of 2.5 million GE built-in dishwashers manufactured from September 1997 to December 2001. The reason for the recall is that over several years, liquid rinse aid can accumulate on the wires inside the dishwasher door and degrade the insulation on the wiring, causing an electrical short, overheating, or fire if the wire comes into contact with the metal door. GE has received 135 reports of overheated wiring and 56 reports of property damage, including 12 reports of fires that spread outside the dishwasher. Fire damage was limited to the dishwasher or the adjacent area, and no injuries have been reported.

This recall encompasses not just GE brand dishwashers, but also some appliance models manufactured under the Eterna, Hotpoint, and Sears-Kenmore labels. If you have one of these dishwashers, you should stop using it immediately until you obtain more information.

To determine if your dishwasher is included in the recall, you can check the GE website at <http://www.geappliances.com/products/recall/dwo7/> or call the GE Recall Hotline at 1-877-607-6395.

### **In the Works: Updating Neighborhood By-laws**

It's hard to believe for the "old-timers" among us who have been in the neighborhood from the beginning, but it has been more than 20 years since the building of the neighborhood and the creation of the

Afton Glen Homeowners Association. Our community is alive and well, but our association bylaws might be getting a bit long in the tooth. For example, during the past two decades, numerous changes have occurred in various state and local laws relating to neighborhood associations and architectural review standards. So the Board is beginning to formulate plans for reviewing the bylaws and architectural guidelines, aligning them with current laws, fixing any gaps we might identify, and so on.

We'll have more to say about this by the time we have our annual neighborhood meeting next January. In the meantime, let us know about any suggestions or ideas you might have.

### **Opportunity Knocks at Citizen Corps Council**

We received a letter from Fairfax County Supervisor Gerry Hyland calling attention to the county's Citizen Corps Council (CCC) created last year.

The council coordinates training and assignment of volunteers who work through the county Office of Emergency Management and the Fire and Rescue, Police, and Health Departments. Among the council's volunteer programs are the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Fire Corps, Neighborhood Watch, and affiliated organizations such as the American Red Cross, Volunteer Fairfax, and other first responder humanitarian agencies.

Representatives from the council and individual programs are available to homeowner associations, businesses, and other local organizations. Many of these programs can also conduct corporate training programs.

Volunteer opportunities and other information can be found at <http://fairfaxcountycitizenscorps.org>, or contact Andrew Levy, Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council Chair, at [andrew.levy@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:andrew.levy@fairfaxcounty.gov) or Al Bornmann, Mount Vernon District Representative to the Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council, at [al\\_bornmann@sra.com](mailto:al_bornmann@sra.com).

### **Keep It Clean— Lawn Edging, That Is**

This is the time of year—especially noticeable after long dry spells—when crabgrass and other weeds seem to finally triumph over the bare spots in our lawns, and start to crawl out over the sidewalks and curbs. Please try to keep up with edging to preserve a neat and well-groomed appearance.

# Afton Glen Homeowners Association Architectural Review Board Inspection Checklist

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

The items on this checklist are not intended to be all-inclusive but rather serve as a guide to the most often noted discrepancies.

This checklist is not a substitute for obtaining project approval as required in the ARB Guidelines. References are to section (§) and paragraph of the ARB Guidelines (*Afton Glen Homeowners Association Handbook*, revised 2000).

Items are considered a deficiency if they are visible from the curb, regardless of where on the property the violation is situated.

- Minor Point of Concern
- Major Point of Concern

## Fences:

- Not constructed in accordance with ARB approved plans on file with the management company. (§VII, 1)
  - In poor repair (missing boards, visible rot)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Storage Sheds:

- Not constructed or emplaced in accordance with ARB approved plans (§VII, 2)
  - Not screened or shielded from view of street (§VII, 2)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Patios & Decks:

- Not constructed in accordance with ARB approved plans (§VII, 3)
  - In poor repair (e.g., missing boards, painted, solid screening)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Arbors, Trellises, Privacy Screens:

- Not constructed in accordance with ARB approved plans (§VII. 3. C.)
  - Installed as freestanding wall or fence
  - Installed with framing
  - Installed in place of railings
  - Solid screening
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Recreational and Play Equipment:

- Not approved by ARB (§VII, 7)
  - Rusting, falling apart, missing major components
  - Extremely faded, peeling paint
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Exterior Painting:

- Color is not in accordance with §V (McCormick's Williamsburg Paints)
  - Paint is peeling, blistered, extensive mold visible from curb
  - Dirty/stained
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Exterior Trim/Woodwork:

- Trim is missing (fascia boards, window sills and frames, door frames), extensively damaged, deteriorated, rotted; replacement most likely remedy
  - Loose, caulk missing; repair needed
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Siding:

- Missing, cracked (vinyl), major dents (aluminum), bricks missing/spalling (loss of surface)
  - Extensive mold/algae
  - Dirty/stained, mortar missing, buckling
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Gutters and Downspouts:

- Missing, sagging, major dents
- Adversely affects drainage on adjacent properties
- Mold/algae

---



---



---

Roofs:

- Asphalt shingle tabs damaged (cracked, broken)
- Missing shingles, deteriorated/worn

---



---



---

Driveways/Walks/Stoop:

- Asphalt extensively cracked (cracks greater than 1/4" wide, missing pieces of asphalt, "alligator" cracking over 25% of driveway, weeds growing through asphalt)
- Concrete cracked and missing large pieces of concrete
- Extensive deterioration of concrete, missing bricks, or missing/damaged handrail on steps
- Sidewalk poses a tripping hazard or is broken (report this to VDOT—not the homeowner's responsibility to repair)
- Asphalt settled, some cracking less than 1/4", extensive oil stains
- Concrete stained, minor cracking

---



---



---

Landscaping:

- Obstructs sight lines for traffic (§VII, 26)
- Planted areas contain extensive amounts of weeds or dead plants (§VIII)
- Accumulated trash or debris (§VIII)
- Dead trees and shrubbery (§VIII)
- Failure to edge sidewalks, allowing overgrowth (§VIII)
- Lawn not mowed, in excess of 6" high (§VIII)
- Lawn areas not repaired when turf is dead (weather conditions are given consideration)
- Planting areas or lawn not repaired when trees/shrubs removed

---



---



---

Trash:

- Trash cans and/or recycling bins stored in front of house (§VII, 22)

---



---



---

Mailboxes:

- Dented, door broken or missing, rusty, post not plumb

Notes:

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions about the inspection please contact: \_\_\_\_\_