



AFTON GLEN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER – FALL 2009

Executive Board

David Buffington	President	703 455-1482
Dennis Dombkowski	Vice President & newsletter editor	703 644-4507
John Davies	Secretary	703 440-8934
Dan Sigg	Treasurer	703 451-7649
Melissa Hopkins	Board Member	703 569-3390
Hal Neptune	Board Member	703 455-9261
Carol Ward	Board Member	703 866-4697
Chris Huemmer	CSH Community Management	703 913-1480

MONTHLY MEETINGS. The Board usually meets the third Wednesday of every month—check for postings on the gazebo and our web site at <http://mysite.verizon.net/afton.glen/>. 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 David Buffington or Chris Huemmer, and we'll add the topic to our agenda.

Mark your calendar to attend annual meeting on December 10

The neighborhood annual meeting will take place Thursday, December 10, at 7:15 p.m. at St. Raymond's Church, 8750 Pohick Road, in the parish hall on the lower level.

You should already have received a notice in the mail regarding the meeting, plus a proxy form. Please make plans to attend the meeting if at all possible, or to return your proxy if you cannot attend.

Several important items are on the agenda:

- Presentation of the 2010 budget. You'll be happy to know that—despite our past problems with the Koger embezzlement—our association finances are in pretty solid shape, and no increase in the annual fee will be needed for 2010. We will also discuss our enforcement efforts regarding delinquent accounts (see separate story).
- Discussion of the revised neighborhood handbook, which contains the standards and guidelines followed by the Afton Glen Architectural Review Board (ARB). We've been working to streamline the rules and bring them up to date, refresh them to take account of new building technologies, eliminate outdated language, and so on. Among the significant changes is a revision to allow different types of driveway materials, within certain color limitations. We have also made some minor revisions to the ARB approval request form. The revised guidelines and form will soon be available online at <http://mysite.verizon.net/afton.glen/> under the heading

“Rules and Regulations.” A copy of the finalized rules will eventually be mailed to all homeowners.

- Election of board members to fill two vacant seats. Please consider volunteering your time to serve on the board. No special qualifications are required (though all your assessment payments must be up to date). Your efforts will have a direct benefit for our neighborhood, and the community will appreciate your service.

Architectural Review Board needs someone's help: Yours!

The Architectural Review Board—a body that is separate from the association Board of Directors—helps to establish neighborhood guidelines and monitor compliance with them. Recently the association began an effort to ensure that the ARB is responsive in handling approval requests for your various home improvement projects.

A few elements are key to ensuring that the ARB is responsive and effective:

- *A consistent process*—As indicated on the approval form, every request should go through our management agent, CSH Community Management. In some straightforward situations the management agent will provide an immediate response. In other cases, the management agent will forward the request to the ARB. Our guidelines set clear time limits for making a decision (or requesting further information, if needed).
- *Practical ARB guidelines*—As mentioned in the previous story, that's something we've been working on, and will be discussed at the annual meeting in December.
- *Active volunteer participation*—This is where you come in! The ARB needs volunteer members to review and re-

spond to approval requests, and monitor the condition of the neighborhood. No special qualifications are needed, so please consider donating some of your time. Contact John Davies (703 440 8934) or any other member of the association Board of Directors.

How to know if your project requires ARB approval

Some home improvement projects require ARB approval, and some don't. How can you know which is which? First, consult the ARB guidelines, which in most cases will

shed some light. One important rule of thumb is that if your project will change the exterior appearance of your home or lot, you need prior approval. If you are in doubt, or if you have questions about the requirements or approval process, contact the management company. The table below lists some common scenarios.

Remember that you must submit the approval form only to the management company, not personally to any ARB member or association Board member. The management agent will notify the ARB, which will act on the request promptly.

	Examples that DO NOT REQUIRE prior approval ▼	Examples that REQUIRE prior approval ▼
Exterior features	Replacing existing approved exterior items with the same items and materials.	Changing the exterior of your home or lot. This means changing or altering exterior features (siding, paint, windows, roof, etc.), additions, driveways, or landscaping.
	Repainting your front entrance door with the same approved color as before.	Repainting your front entrance door a different color than before.
	Replacing your roof with the same approved type and color as before.	Replacing your roof with a different type or color.
	Replacing your driveway with the same approved material as before, and with the same dimensions.	Replacing your driveway with a different material and/or color, or changing its dimensions.
	You want to replace doors, shutters, roofs, or other exterior features with substantially the same items.	You want to replace doors, shutters, roofs, or other exterior features with items of a different style or color.
Landscaping	Removing trees or shrubs that are dead, diseased, or badly damaged.	Removing sizable healthy trees or shrubs.
	Replacing your existing worn-out lawn with new sod or seeding.	Noticeably reducing the size of your lawn to install new or enlarged shrubbery beds or flower gardens.
	Replacing old or overgrown landscaping with new plants of the same type, and your project is no larger than 20 feet x 20 feet (400 square feet).	Redesigning your front or rear landscaping, and your project is larger than 20 feet x 20 feet (400 square feet).
Decks	Replacing worn-out decking and deck railings with the same approved materials as before.	Replacing your deck with a larger or redesigned one, or replacing it with a new type of material.
	Repainting or restaining your deck with the same approved color as before.	Staining or painting your deck with a different color than before.

Association continues efforts on delinquent accounts

Most of us realize that the annual neighborhood association fees provide the funds we need for obtaining necessary trash collection, landscaping, neighborhood management, maintenance and repairs in the common areas, and other services. And in fact our homeowners generally are really great about paying these fees—a record we can be proud of, and grateful for.

But one of the Board's less pleasant responsibilities is to ensure that all neighborhood homeowners pay the fees. In recent months the Board has continued its efforts to persuade homeowners with delinquent accounts to pay down

their balances. In a few cases this has led to obtaining liens—and in one instance, a formal court order—against homeowners with significant amounts past due.

The Board regards such legal action as a very last resort. It takes time and costs money, and puts the association in an adversarial position against homeowners who are a part of our community. We'd really rather work something out without involving the lawyers.

So we urge anyone who is behind in their payments to contact our management agent to come up with a feasible payment schedule. This can be a difficult subject, but don't let inertia or embarrassment keep you from communicating with us. We'll do all we can to reasonably accommodate your situation.