

# AFTON GLEN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2008



### Executive Board:

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**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.

## Results of annual neighborhood meeting

Thanks to all who attended or submitted proxies for the annual meeting, held at Sangster Elementary School on January 16. Your active involvement and participation allowed us to resolve some pressing issues confronting Afton Glen. The following were among the main actions at the meeting:

- **Budget approval:** A budget for 2008 was approved, which entailed an increase in quarterly association dues to \$130. This increase has allowed some flexibility in choosing a new management company, and it will enable us to continue setting aside reserve funds for repair or replacement of neighborhood common property (walkways, gazebo roof, etc.), and budgeting for regular audits.
- **Audit summary:** An official audit of Afton Glen's 2005 and 2006 financial records by an independent certified public accountant found an unaccounted loss of \$7,666.94. The loss appears similar to other embezzlement of funds from homeowner associations that occurred in those years at Koger/Tri-State. We have filed a claim for this amount in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Alexandria, VA, in connection with Koger/Tri-State's pending bankruptcy filing.
- **Management company:** The clear sentiment expressed by those present was to change from Koger/Tri-State to a different property management company. The association board pursued this task and has contracted with a new company (see separate item below).

- **Board member election:** A new board member, Melissa Hopkins, was nominated and elected unanimously to fill a vacancy on the association board. The members and officers of the association board are now as shown at the top of the newsletter. Welcome, Melissa, and thanks for your help!

## East Coast Management Inc. will serve Afton Glen

After reviewing bids from several prospects, the board chose East Coast Management & Consulting Services Inc. of Springfield, VA, to replace Koger/Tri-State for providing neighborhood management services. It will assume these duties starting May 1, 2008, and will coordinate with Koger/Tri-State to accomplish the transition of records, paperwork, etc.

East Coast Management strongly impressed the board with an approach that is direct, engaging, and proactive. You should expect a *much* more personal, hands-on presence of the company, and of property manager Chris Huemmer in particular. He will be conducting regular neighborhood drive-through and walking visits, making observations about maintenance needs, and providing ad hoc friendly notices and reminders about house and yard upkeep (aside from major items found during the annual inspection).

We expect and welcome this active management, because it will help contribute to a neighborhood that runs smoothly, is well-maintained, and remains a desirable place to live. It's something we want our property manager to do for us as a community.

You can also expect a more aggressive effort at collecting and enforcing payment of association dues. So if you're not already current and up to date in your neighborhood association dues or other fees, please make an effort to do so. The transition period from one management company to another is a very valuable opportunity for Afton Glen to consolidate its financial strength. The neighborhood operates on a very small financial margin, meaning there's not a whole lot of "wiggle room."

In the near future you should be receiving an introductory letter from East Coast Management. In the meantime, continue to pay any dues or other amounts owed as before, to Koger/Tri-State. All fund management, payments, accounts, and records will transfer to East Coast Management as of May 1.

## **No parking of big vehicles allowed anywhere in Afton Glen**

On March 10 the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors established the entire Mount Vernon District—which includes Afton Glen—as a "community parking district" with prohibitions against parking large or recreational vehicles on public streets. Individual communities within the district no longer need to petition the county case-by-case for these special restrictions. The rules became effective April 11 and are in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and the county does not plan to install notification signs. County police may ticket violations with warnings or fines.

In combination with Afton Glen's existing restrictive covenants, the new rules essentially mean that large or recreational vehicles may not be parked other than for a short time anywhere in Afton Glen at any time, whether on public streets or private property.

Under the new county rules, none of the following may park on public streets in the Mount Vernon District, including those within Afton Glen:

- Watercraft, boat trailers, motor homes, camping trailers, or any other trailer or semi-trailer
- Any vehicle with three or more axles
- Any vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 12,000 pounds or more, except school buses currently and regularly used to transport students
- Any vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, except school buses currently and regularly used to transport students
- Any vehicle of any size used for transporting hazardous materials.

The above restrictions do not apply to the following:

- Commercial vehicles dropping off passengers or parked temporarily while performing work or service at a particular location

- Utility generators located on trailers used to power network facilities during a loss of commercial power
- Restricted vehicles temporarily parked for a maximum of 48 hours in order to load, unload, or prepare for a trip.

The new regulation applies only to parking on public streets, but Article VI, Section 13 of the Afton Glen covenants prohibits the parking of certain vehicles anywhere in the neighborhood as follows:

Section 13.

No junk vehicles, recreational vehicles, house trailers, or commercial or industrial vehicles such as, but not limited to, moving vans, trucks, tractors, trailers, vans, wreckers, hearses, buses, boats, boating equipment, travel trailers, or camping equipment shall be regularly or habitually parked within the boundaries of the subdivision, except in the areas designated by the Association.

This restrictive covenant encompasses **both common and private property**. No area has been designated by the association as acceptable for parking such vehicles.

## **Church outlines plan to improve parking**

In a letter to board President John Davies, the Diocese of Arlington has outlined the components of its strategy for parking control at St. Raymond. The plan was developed in coordination with the board and affected homeowners. Residents were briefed on the main points of this plan during the annual meeting. It consists of four elements:

- *Amend development condition*—Afton Glen does not wish to pursue a restricted parking district, nor would it be legal or feasible to prohibit only church-related vehicles from parking on neighborhood streets. Therefore, the church will not install any parking restriction signs as originally required by county development conditions. Afton Glen will support the church's application to amend this development condition.
- *Paint curbs*—The church will paint various curbs near intersections and fire hydrants to prohibit parking, and will maintain the curb painting as part of regular parking lot striping. If the county does not permit the curb painting, the church will install "no parking" signs near these intersections and hydrants.
- *Instruct officers*—The church will coordinate with county police to instruct officers to encourage enforcement of the no-parking areas.
- *Expand on-site capacity*—The church will explore solutions to expand on-site parking near the storm water retention pond. If this is feasible the church will submit the necessary application to the county, and Afton Glen will support that request.

## **Coming soon: the annual inspection**

The Architectural Review Board will conduct the annual neighborhood inspection of properties soon. A checklist of the most common problem items was supplied with a previous issue of the newsletter last year, the idea being that it would help you to anticipate what your own property might need and to deal with it before triggering a violation notice.

If you missed that checklist or lost your copy, call Denis Dombkowski at (703) 644-4507 for a replacement, or you can download it from the neighborhood website at <http://members.cox.net/aftonglenweb/>. Look for the “Architectural Review Board Inspection Checklist” on the Rules and Regulations page.

## **Afton Glen Yard sale scheduled for May 31**

The Afton Glen spring yard sale will take place on Saturday May 31 (rain date is Sunday June 1). Empty your garage, basement, and overstuffed closets. We will advertise the yard sale in local newspapers and place signs at the entrance to the community.

## **Neighborhood spring cleanup scheduled for May 10**

Please mark your calendars for May 10, and volunteer a couple of hours of your time to help with our spring spruce-up. Report at 8:00 a.m. to the walking path entrance on Green Garland Drive with some work gloves. We'll clean up stream rubbish, overgrown brush, fallen trees obstructing the walking path, and the like.

Even if you can't help during our cleanup, see the items below on the walking path trash can, storm drains and sewers, and hazardous waste recycling.

## **Rules for pickup of yard debris**

AAA collects yard debris (leaves, grass clippings, branches, etc.) each Wednesday from mid-April until December. The company states the following limits and requirements for pickup:

- AAA will attempt to pick up what is set out for collection, but during peaks in yard waste production it may choose to limit collection to 20 bags of yard waste per pickup day.
- Brush and limbs must be cut into 4-foot lengths, bundled with rope or twine, and should not exceed 50 pounds. Tree limbs that are larger than 6 inches in diameter and 4 feet in length will not be collected.

- AAA can impose a handling charge on any household putting out more than 5 bundles.
- Leaves and lawn clippings should preferably be placed out for collection in clear plastic bags. However, you may also use black plastic bags marked with an “X” for collection.
- All unbundled brush will be considered a special pick up. Call the AAA office at (703) 818-8222 or visit its website at <http://www.aaatrash.com/> in advance to schedule your pickup of these items. The minimum charge for a special pickup is \$50.00.

## **Where to dispose of your hazardous waste**

Please dispose of hazardous waste items properly. Fairfax County operates two permanent disposal sites for household hazardous waste:

- I-66 Citizen's Disposal Facility  
4618 West Ox Road
- I-95 Landfill Complex  
9850 Furnace Road

These sites accept a wide variety of items that should not go out with regular trash, ranging from acids and automobile fluids to weed killers.

The following are items you **can** dispose of with regular trash: non-rechargeable batteries (alkaline and carbon-zinc), fertilizers, lime, and dried latex paints.

For more information see the county's Solid Waste Management Program online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/recycling/>

## **County issues tips for keeping drains and sewer lines clear**

While cleaning gardens for spring, residents should keep public storm drains and sanitary sewers clear of leaves, grass clippings, sticks, rocks and trash. Fairfax County officials are issuing this reminder because these items can cause blockages in storm drains and sewers.

If swept into a storm drain, yard waste or trash can end up in nearby creeks or streams, polluting the environment. These same items can block public sanitary sewer lines and cause sewage backups in homes.

Residents also can take steps to keep their private sewer lines flowing freely. Homeowners are responsible for their lateral sewer lines, which connect their home to the county's sewer system. These tips can help prevent blockages:

- Don't put cooking oils and grease down a garbage disposal or any household drain. Fats, oils, or grease can build up in the system, potentially creating a blockage.

- Don't flush disposable diapers, tampons or sanitary napkins down the toilet—even if the labels indicate that it is acceptable to do so.

Most insurance policies do not automatically cover damage caused by flooding or sewer backups. Homeowners and renters can contact their insurance companies to ask for this additional protection.

If homeowners experience a sewage backup, call Fairfax County's Wastewater Collection Division's 24-hour, emergency line at 703-323-1211, TTY 703-239-8498. For non-emergency concerns, call 703-250-2003, TTY 703-239-8489. County staff can determine if the blockage is located in the county's sewer lines or in the homeowner's private lines.

### ***Has a street light gone dark?***

#### ***Here's where to call***

Our street lights are an essential element of Afton Glen security and convenience. If you see a light out in our neighborhood, don't assume someone else has taken action—you might be the first to notice it. Please help maintain the safety and appearance of the neighborhood by reporting the outage. Call Dominion Virginia Power's toll-free customer service number at 1-888-667-3000.

(To report street light outages at major interchanges or to report traffic light problems, call the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) at 703-383-8368.)

### ***Seeking a volunteer to adopt trash can on walking path***

Looking to perform a simple community-building activity as part of a school or organizational effort? Afton Glen would like to find someone willing to monitor and regularly empty the trash can on our walking path near Green Garland Drive. If you're interested, contact John Davies at (703) 440-8934 or via e-mail at jedavies\_8629@mac.com

### ***As always, Afton Glen needs your donation of time***

The terms of the board members are staggered such that board vacancies occur each year, and volunteers are needed for the Architectural Review Board.

So please consider stepping forward and offering your time and energy as a member of one of these boards. No special expertise or talent is required—just a commitment to benefiting the neighborhood. We know you're busy, so monthly meetings can be scheduled flexibly to accommodate your business travel, vacations, family responsibilities, or other activities.

### ***Needed: newsletter input***

If you have other community information, please contact Dennis Dombkowski, (703) 644-4507.