



Currents Newsletter February 2009

*A publication for members of the
Woodlake Homeowners Association*

Board of Directors

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Board of Directors Report

This newsletter highlights key changes and accomplishments in 2008, and plans for 2009. Details on several of the items highlighted below are discussed later in this newsletter.

Annual Meeting. The Woodlake Homeowners Association annual meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 27. Please mark this date on your calendar.

Private Streets. The first developer of Woodlake constructed the initial five streets, water lines, and sewer lines as private utilities. When the developer left, maintenance of these facilities became the responsibility of the WHOA, whereas subsequent streets and utilities were built as public streets and are maintained by the City of Durham. Responsibility for maintenance of these streets is a major financial liability for the association and all of our members.

The city has a mechanism for transferring private streets to the city, but this process requires preparing "as-built" surveys of the streets and utilities, repaving the streets to city technical specifications, and approval of the homeowners to provide a dedicated right of way

for city use in case future repairs are needed. In 2002, this process was used to transfer Lakeshore Drive to the city. In 2006, work on the as-built surveys was initiated on the remaining four private streets (Great Oak, Boxwood, Cedar Hill, and Fall). After several review cycles by the city, we finally received approval to start collecting signatures from each of the affected homeowners. Collection of signatures from homeowners on the four streets began in October. Street repairs required by the City of Durham are scheduled to start in mid-March.

Alta Walk Apartments. During the spring of 2008, construction started on Alta Walk, the seniors' apartment complex on the southeast corner of Fayetteville Rd and Woodcroft Parkway. The two single-story townhome buildings are scheduled to be completed in March, and construction of the two three-story apartment units should be finished by early summer. At the request of Alta Walk, the WHOA has allowed the developer to rent our clubhouse for use as a sales office during the weekdays (the clubhouse remains available for WHOA use and rental to others).

Neighborhood Watch. In response to several incidents in late 2007, one of the key initiatives undertaken by the board in 2008 was to

strengthen our Neighborhood Watch program. Because of the size of our neighborhood (over 600 houses and townhomes), one of the key actions was to establish eight areas, which were then subdivided into "blocks" containing 10-20 houses each. The planning and execution of this effort was led by "Area Coordinators" and "Block Captains" who contacted individual residents to explain the program goals and gather resident names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and emergency contact information. Additional information of the program is provided later in this newsletter.

Notification & Enforcement Policy: The WHOA Protective Covenants and Handbook cover a number of topics, such as home improvements, yard maintenance, on-street parking, and pets. The policies in these documents exist for the mutual benefit of the entire community. Unfortunately, situations arise when it is necessary to notify residents of violations and request that the problem be corrected. The WHOA Board has agreed to the following three-step notification and enforcement procedure for addressing problems when they arise:

1. A letter to the homeowner asking for the problem to be fixed or for an explanation of special circumstances (e.g., why more time is needed) within 10 days of letter's send date. Based on past experience, most homeowners and residents correct the problem within this time period.
2. If no action is taken within 10 days, a second letter is sent informing the homeowner that the Board will hold an enforcement hearing on a specific date unless the problem is resolved by not later than 48-hrs prior to the hearing.
3. A hearing is set by the WHOA Board, allowing the homeowner to present relevant information. Based on the homeowner's presentation, the Board can either reach an agreement with the homeowner to resolve the issue or assess a fine of up to \$100 per violation. If the violation is not resolved within 5 days after the homeowner is notified of the Board's decision, a fine of up to \$100/day can be assessed and HOA privileges (e.g., use of the pool and voting) can be suspended.

If a homeowner repeatedly violates a rule, the notification and enforcement process can be shortened. These procedures are based on the requirements in the North Carolina Planned Community Act Board (NC Statutes, Section 47F). The Board hopes that enforcement actions are rarely required, but also recognizes that all homeowners need to understand that action will be taken when necessary to protect our neighborhood's best interests

If you have questions about the above or other items of importance to the WHOA, please contact the Board by sending an e-mail to board@woodlakecommunity.org or by contacting CAS (the association's management contractor; their address and phone number are on page 8), or talking directly to a board member.

Finance Committee

The WHOA continued its history of fiscal stewardship, finishing 2008 with total revenues of approximately \$215,300 vs. budget of \$208,700 and total expenses of approximately \$202,800. The surplus of approximately \$12,600 will be applied to WHOA reserves. The major expenses incurred during the year included:

In addition, approximately \$63,800 was paid from reserves for trail and clubhouse improvements and approximately \$20,700 was spent towards the surveying and legal expenses associated with the planned conversion of the community's remaining private streets.

The Board has approved a balanced budget for 2009 that does not require an increase in dues. This was accomplished by controlling expenses and negotiating favorable contracts with service providers. Woodlake continues to be an appealing community with a reasonable dues structure compared to similar nearby communities.

Architectural Review Committee

During the past year, the ARC has worked to clarify the process for obtaining required approval for exterior changes to homes in Woodlake. A letter explaining the ARC approval process is printed on p. 7 of the newsletter and is posted on the ARC page of the Woodlake website, along with answers to frequently asked questions. To assist with monitoring of exterior repairs throughout the neighborhood, homeowners should notify ARC of all planned maintenance work via e-mail to ARC@woodlakecommunity.org or a phone call to CAS. If the work will require ARC approval, a full application with signatures from neighbors is required. Additional details are in the letter on p. 7. If you have any questions, contact ARC at the above e-mail address.

Website and Members Information

Be sure to checkout the new Woodlake website at www.woodlakecommunity.org. The WHOA website provides information for use by Woodlake residents, including e-mail links for contacting the Woodlake Board and various committees, a list of announcements that have been sent out via the Woodlake listserv, and electronic copies of documents and forms (architectural requests, pool and exercise room access, etc.). The new design also includes photos of our community, updated news and events, and a virtual gallery

Several realtors have had encouraging comments on the site's improvements, saying that a website that showcases a community well increases property values. Webmaster, Wally Turnbull, says that while that is a great bonus, "The purpose of the website is to communicate and build community."

In addition to community news the website introduces a Resident Gallery featuring the work of talented residents. If you like to express yourself creatively, whether professional or amateur, please share your work. If you have questions or comments on the website or would like to submit an article or local event information, or other material for posting on the website, contact: webmaster@woodlakecommunity.org

One of the new features of the website is a community communications bulletin board/blog accessible through the Members page. Under this new system, if you are a registered user, you can subscribe to the comments section and receive an email when comments have been added. Previously, this was more cumbersome and required logging in to read comments or to check for updates. Comments and questions are posted through the website but now you can choose to receive copies of comments by email or not as you wish.

You are encouraged to register and opt in for these email notifications. This is one way to know what is going on and contribute. You are also able to login to the comment section to post a comment or question. WHOA does not want to become part of your junk mail so no one is being added to this feature except by choice. For a login account go to the homepage and click the register button. (Note: Registering for the Members page is not the same as signing up for e-news – see p. 7.) Comments are welcome.

Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is one of the most effective and least costly ways to reduce crime in residential areas. It forges bonds among residents, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between police and the communities they serve. Reinvigorating Woodlake's Neighborhood Watch program was a major objective of the WHOA in 2008. One of the primary reasons for this effort was the number of home and car break-ins that occurred over the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons in 2007.

In response, a group of volunteer "area coordinators" worked during the spring to develop a program structure and to recruit "block captains" who in turn worked to make residents aware of the program and to get names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for the neighbors. In August, Neighborhood Watch spearheaded Woodlake's participation in National Night Out to encourage neighbors to meet each other and share crime prevention information.

Although Woodlake's program is too new to claim it is a success, the level of home break-in was substantially lower in 2008 (5 reports) than

in 2007 (21), but car larcenies were up (18 versus 13). Although incidents over the Thanksgiving and Christmas periods were lower than in 2007, they were still noticeably higher than during the earlier part of the year.

In 2009, Neighborhood Watch's goals are to:

- Have block captains for all Woodlake streets (we currently have captains for 45 of the 50 blocks in the Woodlake),
- Improve residents awareness of crime prevention and safety in their area through increased contact and communication, and
- Further decrease criminal incidents in Woodlake, especially during the holidays.

If you do not know who your block captain is, send an e-mail to: watch@woodlakecommunity.org.

What can residents do NOW? Here are a few suggestions discussed at the recent Neighborhood Watch meeting:

- **Know your neighbors!** You can make a big impact on crime by noting anything out of place or suspicious in the neighborhood and calling the police to investigate. If your neighbors are on vacation, but there is a strange car in their drive way - call the police!
- **Improve security around your house:** Add motion sensor flood lights. Put a lock on the door to the crawl space under your house. Install and use an alarm service. Keep shrubs near your house trimmed. Consider installing a home alarm system.
- **Don't let criminals know when you aren't around.** Pickup your newspaper in the morning, don't leave trash and recycling bins on the curb. Leave lights on timers when you are away. If a criminal thinks you are at home, he or she will likely move along.
- **Don't tempt criminals.** Don't leave wallet, purse, GPS, iPod, or other valuables in your car unattended. Don't leave door or windows unlocked - if you have a garage, dead bolt the door from the garage into your house.

Crime can occur anywhere. Know your neighbors and report anything suspicious to the police. By taking a few simple precautions, we can keep each other – and Woodlake – safe!

Welcoming Committee

The Woodlake Welcome committee's mission is to personally welcome new homeowners and to help them understand the wider community we live in via a welcome package that includes information about the area and a map of Durham.

During the last half of 2008, 27 new owners were visited by committee members.

If you have a new neighbor, make them aware of the WHOA web site and send a message to the Welcome committee at welcome@woodlakecommunity.org. Our usual notification of new ownership sometime takes awhile as it's tied into notification to CAS of a home's closing process. By using the WHOA web site link, the committee receives faster notification and can visit the new owner in a more timely manner. Checkout the Welcome page of the website by clicking the welcome button on the bottom right of the homepage.

The Welcoming Committee is also an opportunity for existing residents to get to know new neighbors. If you would like to be a part of this committee, send the committee an e-mail.

Buildings and Grounds

The Buildings & Grounds Committee oversees maintenance of the trails, lake, clubhouse, swimming pool, and all other WHOA property. The committee's strives to enhance both the quality of life and the value of property within the community. Some of the work is done by volunteers, but most of it is performed by contractors. If you would like to join this committee or have questions about its activities, e-mail: grounds@woodlakecommunity.org.

Landscaping: In 2008, the B&G Committee completed several projects to enhance the "curb appeal" of Woodlake. The projects included work along Woodlake Drive, Woodcroft Parkway, and Barbee Road, and around the clubhouse. An additional "work-in-progress" is the planting of a vegetated screen along the lake edge to reduce goose access to the trails. If you have suggestions for future, please send an e-mail to the committee.

New Contractor: As of January 1, Sands Landscape Management is handling grounds maintenance for Woodlake.

Recreational Information

Lake and Pond: The influx of sediment and nutrients into the lake and pond is an on-going problem. To control algae growth, homeowners are asked to limit the use of nitrogen and phosphorus during spring lawn fertilization. Because all surface runoff in Woodlake drains into the lake, every lawn in our neighborhood contributes to the buildup of nutrients in the lake and pond. Two things to remember:

- Most soils in our area naturally have ample phosphorus. Use a low phosphorus fertilizer on your lawn unless you are doing major lawn renovation (best done in the fall).
- Fescue (the primary grass in Woodlake) benefits from fall fertilization and needs only a small amount of fertilization in the spring (equal to ½ lb of nitrogen per 1000 square feet). Applying more than this amount promotes rapid growth (and lots of mowing). The best time to fertilize fescue is in the fall.

Please keep these two facts in mind when you (or a contractor) apply fertilizer to your lawn.

The HOA installed an aerator in the north end of the lake in 2008 to increase dissolved oxygen levels and to reduce odors during dry weather. However, due to the influx of sediment into the lake, the lake has become very shallow in this area, which impairs water circulation. Additional options for improving this problem will be considered in 2009.

Clubhouse Repairs: Significant repairs were made to the clubhouse exterior and pool areas in 2008. Most of this work was required because of wood rot to window frames and fascia boards. The work also included a complete repainting of the clubhouse and pool area exteriors, replacement of warped countertops in the pool house bathrooms, resurfacing of the pool bathroom floors, and sealing of concrete cracks surrounding the pool.

Canada Geese: The population of Canada geese residing at Woodlake continues to be a concern. The geese are the primary cause of droppings on the trails, damage grassed areas, and promote algae growth in the lake due to increased nutrient levels. One of the main contributors to the goose population is resident and visitors who feed them bread. Your cooperation in not feeding them – and asking others to do likewise – is much appreciated.

Pool and Swim Lessons: The key pool news items in 2009 are a somewhat longer season (from May 15 to September 20) and the possibility of swim lessons for Woodlake children. Swim lessons will be offered in two 8-lesson sessions between June 10-19 and June 22-July 2. Instruction will be tailored to age groups (ages 3-6 and 6-14) and skill levels. More information and a registration form are available on the Recreation page of www.woodlakecommunity.org.

Woodlake Seniors Group meets the third Tuesday of each month at 10 AM in the Woodlake Clubhouse. Our programs are varied. Sometimes we have a speaker on subjects of interest to seniors and serve refreshments. At other times, we may go out to eat together or on a field trip to the Durham, Chapel Hill, or Raleigh farmers markets. We have plans to visit museums, art galleries, and the new Durham Performing Arts Center. We invite all Woodlake seniors to join us by sending your email address to seniors@woodlakecommunity.org so that we can notify you of our meetings.

Woodlake Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 11 at the clubhouse. If you would like to help with planning or egg collection, please contact kids@woodlakecommunity.org

Softball players - If you are interested in playing co-ed softball, contact sports@woodlakecommunity.org. All experience and skill levels are welcome, but you must be at least 18 years old. The Parkwood League plays games on Sunday afternoon during the summer and fall at the field next to the Parkwood library.

Call for Volunteers - The WHOA is interested in promoting recreational activities, such as a 4th of July party and a Fall Festival, but doing so depends on the availability of volunteers to coordinate these activities. If you are interested in helping, please send an e-mail to: recreation@woodlakecommunity.com.

General Interest Information

Clubhouse Rental: The Woodlake clubhouse is available for party and meeting rentals. For additional information and reservations, contact clubhouse@woodlakecommunity.org.

Trail Use by Bicycles: The trails are primarily for use by pedestrians and runners. For safety reasons, use of the trails by bicycles should be limited to going to see a friend or getting to the clubhouse/pool or the American Tobacco Trail. It should not be used for riding laps. If you see a bicyclist riding laps or going too fast, please inform them of the rules and send an e-mail to board@woodlakecommunity.org.

Litter: Please don't litter when you are walking or driving in our neighborhood or elsewhere. Be respectful of other residents and of Mother Nature.

Pet Etiquette: Taking care of your pet is your responsibility – 24 hours a day. Three key rules apply when your pet is not in your own yard:

- Keep your pet on a leash when you are taking them for a walk,
- Do not let your pet pee or poop in another resident's yard, and
- Pick up after your pet's poop.

There are pet waste bag dispensers at several locations along the trails. Please use these bags or bring one from home.

In addition to these Woodlake policies, there are City of Durham animal control ordinances. If someone is violating these policies, please contact animal control at 560-0630 or CAS.

Association Handbook

The WHOA Handbook (available on the website or from CAS) contains guidelines and policies that are intended to enhance the quality of life in our neighborhood. Some violations are difficult to detect from the street (e.g., debris in a backyard or a car parked in the street for extended periods). Residents who are aware of problems should contact CAS. Depending on the nature the problem, CAS will either send a letter to the violator, contact the police (if the problem is a violation of a city ordinance or regulation), or discuss the issue with the WHOA Board. The following summarizes some of the rules that are in the WHOA Handbook.

1. Maintenance of Property: The WHOA conducts drive-through inspections to assure that houses and yards are being maintained. These inspections include structural repairs and exterior painting, yard maintenance, and debris removal. These inspections are also conducted to assure that new fences or other property changes have been approved by ARC.

2. Noise: Loud or persistent noise is offensive to your neighbors (especially after dark). In some cases, the quickest way to deal with this situation is to call your neighbor. If the problem persists, the police should be contacted and CAS should be notified. If the problem is on-going and complaints are received from multiple residents, the WHOA will take action.

3. Waste and Recycling Containers: Garbage, yard waste, and recycling containers should not be placed at the street until the evening before pickup and should be removed from the curb by the evening after pick-up. When not at the curb, containers should be stored in an unobtrusive location (e.g., in the garage or a screened area in the side yard).

4. Signs on Association Property: Temporary signs such as Home for Sale, Yard Sale, and other advertisements cannot be placed on association property for more than 24 hours at a time. Association property includes all the entranceways, property around the clubhouse, and areas adjacent to the lake and trails. Signs remaining on association property for longer duration will be removed.

5. Landscaping: The handbook gives homeowners significant discretion regarding landscaping as long as it is maintained and does not involve a structure or block the view of their neighbors. However, ARC can review any landscaping situation if requested by two or more homeowners and can require that the situation be corrected to be harmonious with the overall Woodlake landscape.

6. Solicitors: There are no soliciting signs posted at Woodlake entrances. If a solicitor knocks on your door, you can tell them that these signs are posted, that they are trespassing, and ask them to leave the neighborhood. This policy is not intended to stop the selling of Girl Scout cookies, but rather to keep aggressive pan handlers and scam artists out of our neighborhood.

Letter from the Architectural Review Committee to Woodlake Residents

Dear Woodlake Residents,

We live in a North Carolina community governed by a Homeowner Association (HOA) in accordance with protective covenants. These covenants specify restrictions to changes that homeowners may make to their property. The Woodlake handbook, which must be supplied to you at final closing, references changes that do require approval. Requests for change approval must be submitted to the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), which is the **sole** liaison between homeowners and the HOA in this regard.

Requests for changes to the appearance of the homeowner's property, e.g., color, modifications to structures, or new structures, must be submitted to the ARC, using the forms provided, no later than the Friday evening immediately preceding the next scheduled ARC meeting. (ARC normally meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7 PM in the Woodlake clubhouse.) Four complete copies of the proposal (including supplemental materials) are required, including neighbors' signatures verifying that they have been contacted regarding your request. Any neighbor who could see the proposed changes must be notified and asked to sign the form. **A neighbor's signature does not indicate approval, only notification.** Request forms can be found in the white box on the clubhouse porch. Forms may also be obtained via the website:

www.woodlakecommunity.org/Forms/ARCrequest%202.pdf

E-mail may be addressed to ARC at arc@woodlakecommunity.org. This address can also be used to alert ARC members to of a pending request.

HOA covenants provide that penalties may be levied against the homeowner in cases of failure to seek approval for changes prior to beginning any work. Work may not begin until approval is secured. Penalties may include fines, removal, disassembly or modification to a new/changed structure, including outbuildings, or require that a house

be repainted its original color. **Note that neighbors' objections, if any, will be considered when the ARC makes a decision, and that objections may result in denial of a request.** Modifications to the house interior and routine exterior maintenance (e.g., replacing rotted fascia boards) do not require approval by ARC. However, if exterior maintenance work is extensive (e.g., involving siding or window removal), homeowners should notify ARC of the planned work by submitting an application form, but neighbors' signatures are not required.

With exception of color, siding or roofing changes, all requests require a photocopy of your foundation survey (a plat) with changes drawn in to scale, including base plan and elevation views with dimensions. For color changes, include four samples of color chips for each change: siding trim, door(s) and shutters. It is the homeowner's responsibility to secure all necessary construction permits when applicable.

The committee is willing to work with homeowners to reach a reasonable accommodation if there is any question of compliance with the regulations. If reasonable accommodation cannot be achieved, denials of approval by the ARC may be appealed to the WHOA Board.

As are all WHOA committees, the ARC is an all-volunteer group. We urge homeowners throughout the community to consider serving.

Sincerely,
Woodlake Architectural Review Committee



Don't forget to sign up for e-news through the website homepage. This is the best way to be kept up to date with activities and neighborhood information.

www.woodlakecommunity.org



Want to know what is going on in Woodlake? Community news is disseminated through the community e-news. Sign up to receive these e-mails on the WHOA website www.woodlakecommunity.org

Key E-Mail Addresses to Remember:

WHOA Board of Directors - board@woodlakecommunity.org
Architectural Review Committee - arc@woodlakecommunity.org
Building and Grounds - grounds@woodlakecommunity.org
Communications - communications@woodlakecommunity.org
Community Relations - relations@woodlakecommunity.org
Neighborhood Watch - watch@woodlakecommunity.org
Recreation – recreation@woodlakecommunity.org
Senior Group - seniors@woodlakecommunity.org
Woodlake Welcome - welcome@woodlakecommunity.org



Contact Information for CAS: CAS Inc. assists with day-to-day operation of the Woodlake Homeowners Association. Our Account Manager is Todd Petherbridge. To contact Todd, call 919-403-1400, send a fax to 919-403-1499, or e-mail todd@casnc.com. Normal office hours are 9-4 on Monday through Friday. For after hours emergencies, call 877-420-9320

**Woodlake Homeowners Association
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