Looking for Two New Board Members for 2010

Ken Moritz (President) and Michael Guy (Treasurer) gave us two great years of service, but their terms have expired and we’re in need of two volunteers to serve on the board of directors. Nominations to the BOD will be accepted during the annual meeting on January 27th at the Higher Education Center. Serving on the board means you’ll be in tune with what’s happening, you’ll help make decisions about all aspects of our community, and volunteering for the board is a great way to give something back.

Each member serves a term of two years. Under the current system, homeowners do not run for a particular position on the board, but rather, run to be a general member of the board. Then the five members of the board decide among themselves who will take each position for the coming year based on experience and various other factors.

If you’d like to get more involved, but aren’t sure you’re ready for the board, consider joining one of the various committees. The Architectural Committee, Community Center Committee and Pool Committee, as well as other new committees which are being discussed, are always in need of new and enthusiastic members.

If you think you might be interested in serving on the board, feel free to contact any of the current board members to ask them more about it.

President
The President presides at all meetings of the Members and of the Board and sees that orders and resolutions of the Board are carried out. The President has authority to sign all leases, mortgages, deeds, contracts, notes and other written instruments and has all the general powers and duties which are usually vested in the office of President of a corporation.

Vice President
The Vice President acts in the place and stead of the President in the event of the President’s absence, inability or refusal to act, and has various other duties as may be delegated from time to time by the Board or the President.

Secretary
The Secretary records the votes and keeps the minutes of all meetings and proceedings of the Board and of the Members. The Secretary also serves notice of meetings of the Board and of the Members, keeps appropriate current records showing the Members of the Association, and performs various other duties as required by the Board.

Treasurer
The Treasurer receives and deposits in appropriate depository accounts all monies of the Association and disburses these funds as directed by resolution of the Board. The Treasurer also keeps proper books of account, prepares an annual budget and statement of income and expenditures to be presented to the Members at their regular annual meeting.

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2009 Accomplishments
- Selection and contract for a new pool management company
- Continuing ongoing refinement of committee operations
- Community Spring Cleaning of Community Center and grounds
- Community Yard Sale
- Approval for Daisy and Girl Scout use of Community Center
- Development of a Community News Letter
- Forrest Farm joined Maryland HOA Association
- Continued expansion of FF Web-site capabilities & operations
- Development of a conservative operating budget
- Approximately $15k of funds &/or services from QBH
- Decision to initiate a reserve account
Reminders

Does your tween or teen walk your dog? It’s great when kids take responsibility for owning and raising pets, but please be sure that they’re doing the whole job and not just half of it. The whole job involves bringing along a plastic bag and picking up after you dog. There are still too many owners not picking up after their dogs and this may be one cause of the problem. Thanks for your cooperation.

HOA Dues are $365 due on January 15, 2010

Please remit to
Forrest Farm Homeowner’s Association
P.O. Box 756
Hollywood, MD 20636

Special Offer for Forrest Farm Homeowners

Do your New Year’s resolutions include home improvements? If so, consider using Dean Lumber & Supply Co. They’re offering a 5% discount to homeowners (and an additional 5% rebate to our HOA) on all custom made and/or installed products. Products include windows, doors, decks, custom closets, fireplaces, cabinets, countertops, entertainment centers, bars and much more. (Note: The 5% discount is applied to the products, and not the installation cost.) The HOA rebate will be applied to future community expenditures. Contact sales manager Mary Ann Gatton at Dean Lumber to schedule a consultation.
Dues Up But Not Way Up

You may have noticed that homeowner’s association dues went up this year by about $35, a ten percent increase. While it is an increase, the good news is that a larger increase wasn’t needed. If you’ve attended some of the board meetings in the past year and a half, you probably know that when the board began self-managing our HOA in September of 2008, there was a lot of concern about our budget.

The records that Maredith Management turned over to the board were disorganized and unclear, and for the first several months it was difficult to know our real budget. In addition, no reserve account had been established to deal with major repairs to our community property. At one point, the board feared they would have to raise the dues significantly or even impose a special assessment to make up for an anticipated shortfall. (Note: Ten percent is the maximum that the Board is allowed to raise the dues without community approval.)

Thankfully, we have a dedicated board, which worked through all the confusion and lack of information, and diligently put an accurate budget together. They also saved us close to $40,000 dollars over the past two years, as we were paying Maredith Management nearly $20,000 per year to manage our community. We now have $50,000 in our reserve account and have budgeted another $15,000 that will be added at the end of 2010.

Our HOA is also more transparent and functions better than it did when we used an outside management company. Self-managing works and is cost effective, but it takes a lot of work and volunteerism. We owe a debt of gratitude to our Board for volunteering so much of their time and energy to get our community HOA running smoothly and on budget.

Community Expenses

Your HOA dues pay for:
- Pool management, maintenance and repairs
- Community center upkeep and repairs
- Landscaping of common areas
- Utilities
- Insurance
- …and much more

Reserve Account

A reserve account covers unexpected major expenses, such as replacing the roof on the community center or repairing the pool. There is no definitive answer on the amount an HOA should hold in a reserve account, but many think it should equal one year’s total assessments. For Forrest Farm, that equates to around $100,000. That may seem like a lot of money, but a major repair to our community center or pool area could easily cost half of that amount.

Annual HOA Meeting

January 27, 2010
Wednesday
7:00pm to 8:30pm
at the
Southern Maryland Higher Education Center
Main Conference Room
44219 Airport Road, California

FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

Moving? We are sad to see you leave! Before you go, don’t forget to contact the Homeowner’s Board of Directors. As a homeowner, you are required to contact the Board within 30 days of entering into contract for the sale of your home to notify them of the impending sale. If you plan to rent your house, you must also notify the Board of Directors with your forwarding address and contact information. The Homeowner Association is required to keep detailed records of all homes and homeowners to include addresses. If you are selling your home, a Homeowner Questionnaire is available on www.condocerts.com to begin the notification process.

Wondering how many homes there will eventually be in our neighborhood? The unofficial total is 258, with approximately 246 of those already sold and closed.

You may have noticed work crews installing something along our roadsides a few months ago and wondered what it was. The word is that Metrocast was installing fiber optic cables to increase capacity and the speed of the Internet. We have not yet learned if this will result in any new services in our area, but we’ll keep you posted.

Please be aware that there are hunters in the woods around our neighborhood. If you walk in the woods please wear bright orange for your own safety (and your dogs). Hunters may not discharge fire arms within 300 yards from any building, but if you see someone who you feel is closer than this range, please notify the authorities.
Collecting all EMAIL Addresses !!!

We’re finding it increasingly useful to distribute information quickly to homeowners via email. We’ve developed a distribution list that currently reaches about one-half to two-thirds of our community, but that’s not enough. We want them all! Please know that this list will not be sold or used for unnecessary communications (jokes, forwards, etc.). We will use this list for board meeting notifications and reminders, safety issues, community yard sale announcements, and any other meetings or issues that we think might concern you. If you are not already on the email list, please send your name, mailing address and email address to newsletter@forrestfarmshoa.com and bod@forrestfarmshoa.com.

Open Skate Nights at Leonard Hall

Need some exercise? Open Skate Nights on Saturday evenings from January through April can provide family fun at the Leonard Hall Recreation Center in Leonardtown.

Ages: All ages
Days: Saturdays, January through April 2010
Time: 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Fee: $4 per person. Skates available for rental at $2.50 per person, or bring your own

Please call (301) 475-4200 extension 1800 or 1801 for more information or visit the Department’s website at http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/facilities/leonardhall.asp

Forrest Farm Homeowner’s Association PO Box 756 Hollywood, MD 20636

Board of Directors:
bod@forrestfarmshoa.com
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Vice President: Barry Golden
Treasurer: Michael Guy
Secretary: Tanya Bassett
Director: Betty Eble

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Colleen Gill
Judy Ersek

We’re Online at:
www.forrestfarmshoa.com