

Managers Corner
February 2024

We hope you had a safe and healthy holiday season! As the New Year begins, let us offer some community reminders. We feel that it is important to repeat some of these for the benefit of our newer residents.

Architectural Approval Requests

Our office received a record number of architectural approval requests in 2023c for improvements such as installing a new fence, gazebo, outdoor patio, sunroom or screened in porch, in ground pool, roof replacement, landscape renovations and exterior painting. As spring approaches, we hope residents will continue to plan home and landscaping improvements. Please be sure to submit an Architectural Approval Form to Hawthorne Management Company **prior** to beginning any modification of the exterior of your home. If you plan to install a fence, **first** read the Fence Design Guidelines and then submit a Request for Fencing Architectural Approval Form. Both of these forms are on the community website at www.highlandcreek.com. To access the forms, click on:

- HOA Info
- Governing Documents and Forms
- Request for Architectural Approval

You may also pick up either of these forms at the front desk of the Sports Club at 6616 Clarke Creek Parkway. The request will be reviewed by the Modifications Committee, who will respond to you in writing. Please allow 30 days to complete the approval process. **Prior approval of your modification or fence installation is required before your work begins**; in addition, it may save you time and money.

Exterior Maintenance of House & Storage of Items

The governing documents for Highland Creek hold the Owner responsible for maintenance of the exterior of his/her house. Article XII, Section 6 of the Declaration states that each Owner shall prevent the development of any unclean, unsightly, or unkempt condition on his or her Unit. In recent years, mildew/mold and rotten wood on homes have become widespread maintenance issues. The abundance of rain in the recent past has also caused many backyard fence posts to rot and lean or fall over. Please take the necessary steps to pressure wash the mildew/mold early on and make fence/wood rot repairs as needed.

Additionally, during recent inspections of the community, it's been noted residents are storing miscellaneous items on the side of the house such as lawn mowers, ladders, buckets, empty planters, bags of landscape materials and piles of boxes/trash. Please keep the front and sides of your home clear of these items and store in the garage or out of sight from the street and neighboring properties. Your neighbors will greatly appreciate your efforts!

Ice on the Parkway

We often receive calls about ice on the parkway during the winter months. The ice is not the result of irrigation leakage; the community's irrigation pumps have been shut down. The water may be seepage from the soil in the medians or due to precipitation. Please watch closely for areas of ice and drive safely.

If there is an ice or snowstorm, the streets will be plowed, scraped or salted by the City of Charlotte or the City of Concord. The Highland Creek Community Association is not responsible for this service.

Small Acts of Kindness/Consideration

As we enter 2024, please commit to showing small acts of kindness to your neighbors. You might consider the following:

- Keep your garbage can and recycle container out of view from the street except on the day of pick up
- Keep your pet off of the private property of others and clean up after your pet
- Do your best to curtail your dog from barking excessively, particularly in early morning and late evening hours
- Respect the private property of others when waiting at the bus stop; do not loiter or leave trash in private yards, roads or parks/courts in the community
- Park your vehicles in your garage or on your driveway
- Do not block the sidewalk with toys or vehicles
- Enjoy your fire pits in your back yard
- Trim back tree limbs or shrubs that have grown over sidewalks or walking trails
- Get to know your neighbors
- Report a burned out street light to www.duke-energy.com/customer-service/request-light-repair and follow the prompts for outages

The Essentials of Due Process

When you purchase a home in Highland Creek, you make a commitment to abide by the restrictions outlined in the governing documents. If you did not receive a copy of these documents at the time of closing, you have access to them on the community website, www.highlandcreek.com. From time to time, residents do not comply with the restrictive covenants outlined in these documents. When this occurs, the Association informs the owners/residents about the non-compliant issue and follows what is known as "due process procedure".

Simply stated, this means that the Association notifies residents of alleged violations before taking any action. The Association sends written notice describing the alleged rule violation and asks the residents to correct the problem voluntarily by a specific date.

The Association understands that situations are not always as they seem. If the resident does not correct the problem within the allotted time, they are given an opportunity to appear before an Adjudicatory Panel to express his/her point of view. It's important for residents to communicate with Hawthorne Management upon receipt of a hearing notice or attend the hearing to discuss the alleged violation with the Panel. Following the hearing, the Panel will discuss the situation and information provided by the resident and make a decision about whether a penalty should be imposed. The goal of the Association is not to impose penalties. The goal is for the residents to comply with the governing documents for the good of the community.

Role of Hawthorne Management Company

Many residents are confused by the role of a property management company so it seems appropriate to explain the responsibilities to Highland Creek Community Association. Our office takes its direction from your Board of Directors and acts as an advocate for each resident in the following ways (briefly described):

* **Enforcing Community Restrictions:** inspects the community for violations of the covenants; record and inspect violations reported to us by the covenants inspector and by residents; correspond with residents concerning the existence of violations on their property; set up the opportunity for violation hearings before the Adjudicatory Panel; coordinate the submission and approval/denial of all Architectural Change Requests.

* **Overseeing the Maintenance of Association Assets:** maintain relationships with approved vendors; function as a liaison with contracted vendors; assist in maintenance and repairs of clubhouses, parks, playground equipment, tennis courts, trails, ponds, parking lots, signage, brick wall, fences, etc.

* **Managing Association Assets:** prepare an annual operating and reserve budget for Board approval, process all receipts and payments for Association business, prepare monthly financial statements for Board review, pursue collection of delinquent accounts through the lien/foreclosure process, if necessary; maintain all financial, legal, Owner and property records of the Association.

In addition to our three primary functions listed above, Hawthorne Management serves as the point of contact for resident inquiries, comments, complaints, suggestions, etc.

The staff of Hawthorne Management Company appreciates the opportunity to serve as your management company for the Association. Please do not hesitate to call our office at 704-377-0114 if you have an Association related question, comment or concern.