



March 30, 2015

2015 Volume 1

New Board for 2015

Four homeowners volunteered to serve on the Board for 2015 and were elected at the Annual Meeting. They are:

Dave Manganaro
(301) 766-9266

Andy Hoffman
(301) 739-5183

Dave Kirkman
(301) 331-4369

Ken Archer
(301) 791-1835

Please Pick up After Your Dog !

Dog owners are reminded to pick up after your pets when walking them through the community. With the recent snow melt, it is obvious several dogs have either roamed freely through the neighborhood or their owners have not been respectful of their neighbor's yards in recent weeks. Please clean up after your pet!

HOA Annual Meeting Yields Low Attendance

The 2015 Annual Meeting of the Black Rock Estates Homeowners Association (HOA) was held as scheduled on February 23rd at Beaver Creek Country Club. Sixteen people were in attendance representing fourteen owners—approximately 9 percent of our members.

The meeting was called to order by Mark Harshman and Dave Manganaro gave the Financial Report. (A copy of the financial documents handed out at the meeting are provided with this newsletter.) The HOA is financially sound, with a gain of \$11,091 in 2014 and total assets of \$49,528 in checking and a money market account.

The Board announced the HOA has engaged a new lawyer due to the retirement of our prior legal counsel. The lawyer is primarily used to file liens for properties with delinquent dues and send letters and notices to homeowners who may be in violation of the HOA By-Laws.

The Board also announced the hiring of a small accounting firm to handle the invoicing, dues collection, and bookkeeping duties. Based on comments at the last Annual Meeting, the

Board had investigated using a management company to perform neighborhood inspections, issue By-Laws violation notices, and the accounting tasks. After reviewing several proposals, the Board decided the fees involved were far too high relative to our dues and the service would not be worth the expense.

Individual homeowners at the meeting brought up several specific concerns, including:

- Owners or renters potentially running businesses out of their homes (a violation of the By-Laws)
- Owners who had constructed sheds and other structures without Architectural Review (a violation of the By-Laws)
- People depositing trash on homeowners' property from Mt. Aetna Road and the walking path (a county issue)
- Owners who did not take proper care of their lots or homes which reflected on the community. (also a county issue)

The Board was aware of all of these issues and had

already addressed the potential By-Laws violations with the homeowners involved. The Board will continue to pursue enforcement of the By-Laws where possible, but explained the current By-Laws are unclear in many areas, are weak in others, and early exceptions to the By-Laws granted by the developer had further eroded some of our ability to enforce restrictions that did exist in the document.

There was a discussion about revising the By-Laws, which would require some legal work and a 2/3 majority vote of the present homeowners to enact any change. Although the Board members had discussed this very possibility in earlier meetings, given we cannot get even a 10% attendance rate to our Annual Meeting, the Board is doubtful we could get the required vote to revise the By-Laws.

The Board will continue to address potential By-Laws violations, referring more serious issues to our attorney for action. When appropriate, the Board will also contact local officials about issues affecting Black Rock Estates as a community.

Check out our new HOA web site at www.blackrockestatesmd.org

Have an interest in a hobby or activity?

How about starting a Black Rock:

- ◆ Book club
- ◆ Bunko group
- ◆ Knitting club
- ◆ Golf group
- ◆ Dinner club
- ◆ Ladies Night Out
- ◆ Walking or running group

To get the word out, start a new Discussion topic on the Black Rock Estates web site and let others know of your interest!

Upcoming Neighborhood Events

The HOA has historically supported several community events throughout the year that have been initiated and managed by neighborhood volunteers. We are looking to “restart” some of these events in 2015.

Garage Sale

Black Rock Estates did not hold a community-wide garage sale last year, but we are planning one this spring on Friday May 1st and Saturday, May 2nd. We will advertise the sale in various local publications to generate the maximum interest in the area.

If you would be interested in participating in this year’s event, contact Shirley Giesler at

shirleygiesler@gmail.com
or Joyce Allen at
jallen@myactv.net

Community Picnic

Last year’s picnic was held in early October—a bit late for the best possible weather — without much prior notice. The turnout was good, but we’d like to find a homeowner interested in spearheading the preparations for a larger event a little earlier in the fall.

If you would be interested in managing the picnic or any other community event, please contact Dave Kirkman at:

davek@hbp.com

Email communication

Some residents have asked we use email to increase communication about community issues.

We collected email addresses from interested residents at both the picnic last fall and the Annual Meeting in February. We also have an older list from previous events. We will be adding those emails to our distribution list for future email communications.

If you would you like to be on the HOA email list, send your email address to Erin Walshkirkman at ewalskirkman@gmail.com and we will add you to the email distributions.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ⇒ 34% of all residential burglars enter through unlocked front doors?
- ⇒ And 23% enter though unlocked first floor windows?

For your protection, keep your doors and first floor windows locked even when you are at home!

Source: HanoverFire.com

Columbia Gas service study

Several home owners have inquired about the possibility of having natural gas piped into and through the subdivision.

Columbia Gas has offered to perform an analysis of the potential gas usage versus the upfront cost of running gas lines . Homeowners would have to bear the expense to connect their houses to the line in the street. If the analysis meets their threshold, Columbia Gas would fund the upfront cost of running gas lines through the subdivision.

Columbia Gas has asked the HOA to survey the home owners and find out how many households would hook up to natural gas if it was available. If you want to have access to natural gas as an alternative to propane, please send an e-mail to Andrew.Hoffman@myactv.net with your name and address by **April 15th** to have your home included in the study.

There is no obligation on your part at this point, but by getting enough homeowners to express interest we can ensure Columbia Gas will want to do the analysis.

We are planning to publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis. If you have a topic you’d like to include in an upcoming issue, please add your ideas to the Newsletter Discussion Topic on the Black Rock Estates web site at www.blackrockestatesmd.org.