



Deer Tracks

Deerbrook Home Owners Association Newsletter June 2006

May 8th General Meeting: At our meeting last month, new Board Members and Officers were elected, a detailed budget was discussed and approved, plans were made and approved to revamp the front entrance, and a dues increase was approved. Teri Parkman gave a report on the Neighbors Helping Neighbors efforts. BJ Tracy spoke about the Welcome Committee and presented estimates on sign replacement. Information on the sign, front entry, and financial report are included in this issue of Deer Tracks.

A special thanks to everyone who attended. The DHOA Board needs active participation to remain a vital and effective association.

Deerbrook Home Owners Association and the Deerbrook Covenants:

Recently, new residents of Deerbrook reported being told when they purchased their homes that there are no covenants for Deerbrook, or that the covenants are “voluntary.”

There has been confusion before about covenants and the DHOA, so it might

help to explain. Covenants are a legally binding agreement between all the homeowners who sign them, and remain so even after the homes in question have been sold to new owners. Membership in The DHOA is voluntary. If you don't pay your dues one year, no one puts a lien on your house. However, covenants by definition are not voluntary, but are legally binding. Any homeowner can call upon a neighbor to live up to the covenant agreement, or even seek legal redress to enforce the covenants. Perhaps since the DHOA Board is called on to do most of the reminding and letter-writing, people seem to link the covenants and DHOA. Although DHOA shares some purpose with the covenants (mainly protecting property values), your membership status does not affect your relationship to the covenants.

If you are selling your house, it's important to remember that unless you (or the previous owners of the house) specifically did NOT sign the new covenants in 2003, you are legally bound by those agreements. If you are selling your home you are also legally bound to disclose them to your listing agent and anyone who buys your house.

If you would like to review The DHOA covenants, you can visit our web site at www.deerbrookhoa.org and click on Covenants. There is a summary of the Covenants as well as a copy of the legal document on file with Gwinnett County. Generally, they are very straight forward — the agreement requires that you cut your grass, keep your home in good shape, don't leave eyesores around — all intended to keep homes looking good and property values high. Of course, most people don't think about them since these are things they do normally.

(continued on reverse) In summary, Deerbrook HOA membership is

voluntary, based on payment of yearly dues. The Covenants are not voluntary and are legally binding. All homeowners are responsible for sharing a copy of the 2003 covenants with the next owner of your home, via the real estate agent and/or the closing attorney. Feel free to print a copy from our website at <http://www.deerbrookhoa.org>. If you have questions, please call any Officer or Board member.

Deerbrook Financial Report: At the end of the 2005-2006 year the balance in our account was \$3,990. The budget was approved unanimously for \$4185.00 for the coming year. Below is the line item budget for all our members to see. We feel that with the dues increase coming members ought to be able to view the financials of the HOA for themselves.

EXPENSES	2006-2007 Budget
Bank fees	\$20.00
Corporation Renewal	\$30.00
Directory	\$350.00
Electric	\$150.00
Front Entrance Landscaping	\$300.00
Front Entrance Maintenance	\$2,100.00
Social Events	\$600.00
Luminary Supplies	\$250.00
Online/Web Fees	\$35.00
Printing Reproduction	\$350.00
Yard Sale	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$4,185.00

Front Entrance Sign: After some lengthy debate and discussions it was decided that the front entrance should be redone in phases. The first phase is going to be to replace the existing sign with a newer Polyethylene replacement, in the same design and colors as the present sign. The Board will determine later in the year the specific sign shop to

use, based on bids and quality of work. Our wooden sign up front is more than 20 years old, and has been repaired several times. The front entrance lighting also had to be repaired (again) in January. Phase 2 of the plan will be to reface the brick columns on both sides of the sign with stone. Also the lighting will probably be replaced at this time. Phase 3 will be to professionally landscape the front entrance once the first 2 phases are completed. There is no timeline set for these specific tasks currently but the general feeling is that we should move as our finances allow.

Deerbrook Garden Club: Recently the Deerbrook Garden Club delivered flyers to all residents. In it was some interesting information on gardening. Mark Ackerman spoke at the May General Meeting about the Garden Club. Georgia has its own unique diversity of plant and wildlife. The Garden Club can help identify native species which do well in our specific environment. It is also useful in helping with landscaping and gardening techniques and ideas. The Garden Club has years of local landscaping knowledge which can make yard maintenance better in many ways. If you are interested in participating, or have any questions about Deerbrook's Garden Club, call Mark Ackerman at 770 925-8207.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Report: Another friendly reminder for members that community starts with the people next to you, and building communities takes only a small gesture like making dinner for a neighbor. If you know of a neighbor that may need some friendly assistance or a helping hand contact Teri Parkman 770-931-7108, or if she is unavailable, Debbie Jacobson at 770-925-0871. They will then coordinate the assistance from

volunteers. If you wish to volunteer specific services please call Teri or Debbie as well.

Dues Increase Approved: After a lengthy discussion as to how and why dues should be increased, members in attendance of the May General Meeting voted unanimously to increase dues to \$60.00 a year. DHOA dues are still low at \$60.00 per year. They have been raised twice now in the 21 years of the HOA's existence. The last time was in 2001, (continued on next page) when dues went from \$35 to \$40. Members determined that we are in need of another dues increase in order to continue providing upkeep and lighting for the front entrance, street lighting, continue our neighborhood activities, and increase our emergency reserve fund for unexpected future expenditures. In addition, some of the money will need to go for the front entrance sign. DHOA volunteers have offered free labor and many types of in-kind contributions to keep costs low over the years; for instance, by hand-assembling our directories, contributing all sorts of materials, supplies, services; planting and landscaping the flower beds at the front entrance, cutting trees on the common property, and much more. We expect the cost of the replacement sign for the front entrance to be about \$2000. This would deplete all of our reserve funds. The dues increase will help restore the reserve if collected among the majority of residents who continue to pay membership dues yearly. However, it is likely that we will still need to raise money in some other ways if we want the front entry overhaul completed anytime soon. If you have any fundraising ideas, let us know!

Oleander SUP Defeated: At the Planning Commission Meeting of April

18th the SUP 06-043 was recommended for denial by a 7-2 vote of the Commission. The following week on the 25th the County Commissioners Board denied the SUP in a 5-0 vote at their monthly Board meeting. Shortly after that another SUP was put before the Board off of Harmony Grove Rd. The issues at stake with this development were similar to the Oleander development. Opposition was organized again in the surrounding neighborhoods and the SUP was recently defeated in both Planning Commission and County Board of Commissioner Meetings. Both areas will probably be developed in accordance with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Proposed new development of homes and lots not consistent with Deerbrook or surrounding neighborhoods will adversely impact our homes, values, families and quality of life within the community at large. Property values could be negatively impacted as well. The Deerbrook HOA Board is planning to work with the neighboring HOA's to help organize a larger community organization in order to be able to have stronger local impact on the development concerns in the area of South Gwinnett County. One organization those involved have cited as an example was the United Peachtree Corners Civic Association. They have a website at <http://www.upcca.com/> which gives some good detail on their organization. They have been able to influence the development process in their area.

The Conservation Subdivision Overlay law also needs some attention. The CSO allows land to be developed a lot more densely if 40% of the land is permanently set aside and left undeveloped. However, Gwinnett County allows land that is already unbuildable (river buffers and flood plains, for example) to be included in

this “preserved” land. We feel as do many local residents, environmental groups, and developers that the CSO is not working or being used as intended. The former Secretary and current President of the DHOA Roger Hagen, has met with County Commissioner Beaudreau and asked that something be set up to help re-write the CSO to better protect wetlands and floodplains. Commissioner Beaudreau has been a leader in getting development to slow down and become more environmentally friendly in Gwinnett County.

Crime Watch: There were no reports of any crimes shared with the Board since our last issue. Gwinnett County Police recommend that you let neighbors know when you are leaving town as most break-ins occur when residents are away. If you see questionable activity or a crime in progress, call 911 immediately and report it. Members are encouraged to report any crimes that occur in the neighborhood to the HOA Board so that other neighbors can be notified.

Newsletter Announcements: If you have an announcement, special event, or feedback that you want in Deer Tracks, please contact the DHOA Secretary Elton Thomas at 770 407-1553 or email ebthomas1@comcast.net.

**Deerbrook Home Owners
Association
Officer List May 2006 through
May 2007**

President:

Roger Hagen
4015 Windhurst Ct.
770 806-9055

Vice President:

Patricia Yeargin
1404 Rustlewood Court
770 923-2823

Treasurer:

BJ Tracy
4083 Deerbrook Way
770 717-1917

Secretary:

Elton Thomas
4143 Deerbrook Way
770 407-1553

Keep this list—
it's good until
May 2007!

Board Members:

John Dyer
1384 Rustlewood Ct
770 923-7814

Glenton Ashby
4092 Deerbrook Way
770 925-1567

Debbie Jacobson
1219 Wheatley Dr.
770 925-0871

Debbie Slappey
4093 Deerbrook Way
770 925-7802

Christy Johnson
4132 Deerbrook Way
770 982-3021

Timber Glen Representative:

Tanya Zamora
1172 Timber Glen Court
770 638-1739

Visit our website at

<http://www.deerbrookhoa.org> for
copies of DHOA bylaws, covenants,
photos, links to Gwinnett County
government—which include
Gwinnett property maintenance law,
parking code, animal control, and
how to report violations.

If you have suggestions for the
website or in general, email us at
mail@deerbrookhoa.org. Or, if you
prefer a real-time conversation, you
can call any officer or board
member.