

Hirst Farm HOA

October 2022



Architectural Review Committee Meetings

Reviews applications via email, typical review period is within 2 wks

The Architectural Control Guidelines can be found on the Hirst Farm Website at hirstfarmhoa.com

Board of Directors Meetings

3rd Wednesday every other month 7pm, held virtually, all homeowners welcome

Remaining meeting for 2022 - November 16

Annual Meeting January 18, 2023 to be hybrid - option for in person or online participation. Please consider joining as we need to meet quorum

Board of Directors

Jon Standley, President
Melissa Kowalski, VP
Chris Bertaut, Treasurer
Jen Boner, Secretary
Jaime Franks, Director
Kevin Boyd, Director

Patrick Vasold, Com. Mgr.

Patrick.Vasold@pmpbiz.com

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Leesburg, VA 20176

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The Board of Directors met in January, March, May, July and September. We discussed the town and county efforts with the Hirst Farm Pond, landscaping projects, neighborhood social events, holiday light contests, a community Little Library, and Community Amenities. A Capital Improvement Committee was formed.

The Board of Directors encourages all residents to attend the upcoming meeting on November 16, and the Annual HOA meeting on January 18, 2023.

Upcoming Events

- October: Tag Sale, Pumpkin Carving Contest
- November: Thanksgiving Food Drive
- December: Holiday Decoration Contest



COMMUNITY REMINDERS

- There have been reports of speeding and reckless driving, endangering children and pets in the community. Please drive cautiously. Be alert to pedestrians and, especially, children playing.
- Trees on your property that overhang sidewalks must be trimmed up to 6' and bushes encroaching sidewalks should be maintained to allow for safe travel along the walkway
- Edging and trimming behind the fence is the responsibility of the homeowner
- Loudoun County Animal Control ordinance states dogs may not run "at large" roaming off leash with or without their owner
- Please do not blow grass or leaves into the street. It is a danger to cyclists and significantly compromises storm drain and sewer systems
- Trash and recycling are picked up on Wednesday. Please contact Town of Purcellville with any questions regarding the waste management contract 540-338-7421
- Many neighborly misunderstandings can be solved by simple conversation

Update to the Architectural Guidelines

The Architectural Review Board is taking submissions on updates to the Architectural Control Guidelines, last updated Jan 2020. Please reach out to ARB@hirstfarmhoa.com

Hirst Farm Pond

As noted at our 2021 Annual Meeting, the Board met with County and Town officials late in 2020 to discuss the storm water management pond. The County demanded changes to the construction plan that are not originally in the budget for this project. The Town has been very helpful and has budgeted the remaining amount needed to complete the pond in FY 2024 which begins on July 1, 2023.

As of June 2021, \$75,204 has been spent by the Town, mostly on engineering studies and pre-work. The Town budgeted \$524,795 in FY2022, but has spent only a fraction thus far.

For FY2024, \$496,100 is budgeted by the Town of Purcellville to complete our pond as a wet pond. The Town's engineering manager gave the Town Council an update on this project on September 13th. You can find the latest news at HirstFarmHOA.com.

New Cell Tower on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Property

The Town Council voted to accept a contract with Wireless Edge in September, 2021. Wireless Edge has obtained most of the necessary permits. Following that, construction of the new tower and leasing to carriers is expected to take 6-9 months. The new cell tower will provide some revenue to support the Town's water fund and provide much better cell service for the residents of Hirst Farm. Currently, the nearest cell tower for Hirst Farm residents is the water tower across from Loudoun Valley High School.

In April, 2022, the Town Manager reported that one of the four major national carriers is moving forward with a Lease Agreement with Wireless Edge. Wireless Edge requested and received a Letter of intent (LOI) from the carrier that they are diligently working to bring the site to fruition.

In August, 2022, Wireless Edge conducted a balloon test to demonstrate visibility of the new tower from surrounding areas. This is part of the permitting process for the tower.

Capital Improvements in the Neighborhood

At the January 2022 Annual meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the community amenity project to be led by the HOA Capital Improvement Committee (CIC). This committee will be co-led by BOD President Jon Standley and one general member of the association, to be named. The CIC is responsible for developing a plan to construct one or more common area amenities for the enjoyment of all residents of Hirst Farm. Prior to this year, the many unknowns of the Hirst Farm pond including costs not covered by the town/county, accessibility to the pond by construction vehicles, etc. made moving on with capital improvements to the community difficult.

The CIC had their first meeting in February with minimal attendance. Another meeting is planned for Fall 2022 - look for an email blast and invitation to participate. The committee is currently looking for volunteers to serve and assist with finalizing plans for the types of amenities and determine the common areas where these will be placed. The immediate need is for at least 3-5 general members of the Association to volunteer.

The first amenity being discussed and planned for construction 2023 is a pavilion, tentatively to be located on the A St common area lot where the Association currently hosts community events. This will allow our events to have a central area including shade and power.

The Capital Improvement Committee cannot move forward until at least 3-5 general members volunteer to participate. These decisions cannot be left solely to the Board. Community members interested in serving on the committee can contact Jon Standley (hfbodjstandley@gmail.com) to sign up or learn more.

Tree of Heaven

What is it and why is it a problem?

- **Tree of Heaven** (*Ailanthus altissima*, paradise tree, Chinese sumac, stink tree or just *Ailanthus*). Tree of Heaven is an invasive species first brought to California from China in 1784 and is now a problem in 42 states, including VA. This plant is able to grow in poor soil, with low soil moisture and is immune to air pollution. Unfortunately, it produces an unpleasant odor and regenerates prolifically from root sprouting and heavy seed production (up to 300,000 seeds per year), often resulting in overgrowth and crowding out of native species of trees and vegetation. According to the VA Dept of Forestry (https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/Control-and-Utilization-of-Tree-of-Heaven_pub.pdf), "Seedlings quickly put down a large taproot and can grow up to three feet or more during their first year. Unfortunately, they can dominate an area due to vigorous re-sprouting, root-suckering and secretion of a chemical from its root system to the surrounding soil that is toxic to other plants."

How does it affect Hirst Farm?

- Tree of Heaven has become a problem in many common areas, and is particularly noticeable in the large drainage area between A St. and Devonshire Circle, bordered by Candleridge Ct. and Spring Branch Ct.

What are we doing about it?

- The VA Dept of Forestry (https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/Control-and-Utilization-of-Tree-of-Heaven_pub.pdf) provides a guide for Control or Elimination of Tree of Heaven. There are many options under five distinct categories (physical, thermal, managerial, biological and chemical). Not all of these options are feasible for our situation nor are all of the options similar in their effectiveness.
- We are currently working with our landscape company to develop a plan for controlling the Tree of Heaven along the fence line behind Candleridge Ct. In addition, we have considered goat grazing as a way to control this plant naturally. We are waiting for a cost estimate and details on this option. Unfortunately, the timing for the most effective treatment of this invasive plant is spring/summer and the efficacy of treatment drops off in early fall. Please know that we are searching for a solution to controlling the overgrowth in the common area but the search is taking longer than we had hoped.
- Unfortunately, this area feeds into the wet pond which is considered a part of the local watershed. Many of the chemicals typically used to spray and control Tree of Heaven overgrowth aren't able to be used as a result.

Now that I have a picture, I can see I have it in my own yard. What should I do?

- Complete removal of Tree of Heaven from our common area is a futile endeavor. Each time a root is cut it can send out between 18 and 50 new root shoots which can, in turn, become new trees. Also, once you learn to identify Tree of Heaven, you will quickly realize that it is prolific in the Town of Purcellville. Re-seeding of the area is almost certain. This doesn't mean, however, that we should ignore the problem or not try our best to control it.
- In your own yards, you can manually pull the shoots when the ground is wet (after rain) and/or mow/weed-whack the shoots regularly. As with any weed, this may feel like a lesson in futility! But it is a better option than simply letting it go.



Hirst Farm Fall Events Schedule



October

8th-Town wide tag and yard sale day!

24th-28th- Pumpkin carving online
contest



November

12th-Thankfulness food drive



December

9th-11th Holiday decoration contest!

