



2021 Fall/Winter Newsletter

2022 Annual Homeowners Meeting

Tuesday, January 18th * 6:45pm - 8:30pm

Living Hope Church

2801 W. 18th Ave. (between Oak Patch and Hawkins)

Masks required

On January 18, 2022, we will hold the Annual Meeting for our HOA. We are looking forward to returning to an in-person meeting! Due to the closure of Izzy's Restaurant (our past meeting venue), we have arranged to hold the meeting at nearby Living Hope Church. Their fellowship hall will provide us with a large room, separate tables for seating, and good ventilation. Regardless, we encourage Covid vaccination for anyone planning to attend, and please DO wear masks (over mouth and nose), and honor social distancing. This is for adult homeowners only, and we extend a special invitation to new residents, whom we look forward to meeting. The Board has invited two speakers to address many of our residents' concerns about wildfire risk in Somerset Hills.

The business meeting will include an overview of the past year, our future needs, and a financial report and vote on our proposed 2022 budget. Finally, we will hold elections for Board Directors (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary) and for new and renewing At-Large Board members. If you are interested in being more involved in your neighborhood, Board participation is a great way to do it! Please contact us to be nominated for a position. Light refreshments will be provided, and, as in the past, there will be door prizes! We'll see you there!

Dues for 2022 - \$56.00

Due to inflation and the continued need for costly tree services from severe drought conditions, the Board feels the need to increase dues by the allowed 3% to help defray these costs. The dues for 2022 will be \$56.00 and are due January 1st and no later than March 31st. We are grateful to have about 90% of our homeowners paying their annual dues on time. Besides common area maintenance, dues are used to pay our liability insurance, common area property taxes, mailing costs, post office box rental (which increased from \$106 to \$134), and other miscellaneous expenses. Please include the dues form with your current contact information so that we have a "hard copy" record of your payment. Use the enclosed envelope to return your payment. *Thank you!*

President's Message

As another challenging year draws to a close, I would like to commend our Board members and the Work Party volunteers on all our accomplishments over the past year. In our common areas, a handful of volunteers have battled invasive weeds and blackberries that threaten our recently planted native plants. The Board has been able to maintain regular meetings, mostly via Zoom, with a flexible and positive spirit, culminating with our finding a venue for an in-person Annual Meeting in January! We have also investigated and addressed a number of resident complaints we received, and we responded to requests for Board approval on several homeowner projects. I would like to stress this: the Board *does* respond to direct and specific complaints, maintaining the anonymity of the complainant while enforcing our CC&Rs in a way that seeks to prioritize our neighborhood quality of life and property value. *Our complaint-driven policy does require active participation by homeowners; perceived issues must be brought to the Board's attention in written form (email is fine!) before we can investigate and respond.*

My major source of disappointment over the last year has been the lack of response from homeowners to serve on our Board and Committees. As in past years, this leaves the work of maintaining our HOA to a small handful of community volunteers. We have gone two years now without a Vice-President, and, after serving for 15 years on the Board and 6 as President, I would very much like to step down from my term as President at the close of 2021. I urge any homeowners interested to step up and take a turn serving on the Board in any capacity. Member involvement is the only way we can continue the work so important to our community. Come to the Annual Meeting and/or contact a Board member if you would like to get more information.

- James Carwile

Spring Roadwork

We hope everyone is enjoying our newly and expertly rebuilt and repaved street on the Windsor Circle loop. While the process this spring was unavoidably noisy and inconvenient, it was well-planned and executed by the City of Eugene and Knife River. They were extraordinarily professional, considerate, and responsive to our residents' needs. Everyone appreciates the smoother streets and improved drainage.

On a related topic, drivers need to take note of the new speed limit signs along our streets, *which lower the neighborhood speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph.*



Welcome to the Neighborhood!

We've had continued activity in our neighborhood housing market over the last year, and we now have ten new homeowners. Our HOA extends a hearty welcome to all our new neighbors! The Board encourages you to come to our Annual Meeting in January (see details in this newsletter) to meet your Board and fellow residents. Again, welcome!

City Leaf Collection Has Begun!

The first round of Eugene's Leaf Collection occurred in mid-November, but a second round will take place early in 2022. Public Works asks that all leaves for collection be placed curbside on January 1, and they will be collected soon after. For detailed information, visit:

www.eugene-or.gov/314/Leaf-Collection-and-Delivery

Please keep leaf piles neat and clear of the gutter for rain drainage. Do not park vehicles within 15 feet of piles. Piles should contain only leaves - no Christmas trees, wreaths, or branches! After collection, do not place more leaves at the curb.



Trees – Beauties or Beasts?

Most of us chose Somerset Hills as our home for its natural beauty, especially the abundant trees. Besides their beauty, trees provide cooling shade, reduce greenhouse gases, and provide shelter and habitat for wildlife. Trees also increase your property values. Our CC&Rs even require that every homeowner maintain at least one tree at the front of their property. The past snow and ice storms and ongoing drought have been hard on many of our 'green giants'. It is difficult to tell (even for an arborist) which tree or limb will succumb to adverse conditions. Prevention is key to safe and healthy trees. Trees (limbs) can be trimmed so that the weight of snow or ice will not pose as much of a threat. Drought is tough to combat, but arborists recommend deep watering (soaking the ground around trees for at least an hour or more) once every week or two and heavy mulching to keep trees healthy. Please do not have healthy trees cut down! They are our best natural defense against the effects of greenhouse gases. The city of Eugene is busy planting 2,000 trees because trees absorb CO2 and release oxygen. If a tree or limb should cause damage to your property or your neighbor's, please be aware that unless a person caused the tree or limb to fall, insurance companies consider such damage an "act of nature" and each homeowner's insurance pays for repairs to their own property. The HOA Board tries to identify "problem trees" in our common areas regularly, but we are unable to inspect every tree, every year. The Board asks homeowners to report (in writing, with the location) any observed common area hazards.



Board Business

Urgent - New Board Members Needed!

Our HOA Board is composed of a few volunteer homeowners willing to commit some of their time and energy to serve our community. We are grateful for these individuals, but we need participation from more homeowners - more Board members increase the capacity, responsiveness, and perspectives of our Board, giving voice to our HOA community. For two years now, the Board has served without a Vice-President, and our current President, James Carwile, is hoping to step down from that role at the end of this year, so new interest and involvement is especially critical now.

The Board ideally has four Directors (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary), who each serve one-year terms. The Board also has a varying number of At-Large members, who serve three-year terms. We currently have only four At-Large members. The Board meets on the third Tuesday of odd months for two hours, and Board members often have tasks or projects in-between meetings, but the time commitment is minimal, especially when there are more members to share the work.

Anyone interested in serving on the Board, whether as a member or director, is encouraged to contact us by email, or to attend our Annual Meeting in January, when we take nominations and hold elections. Also please contact us for more information about roles and responsibilities of Board positions, the general purpose of the Board, and any other questions you might have. Get involved and help build a better community!!

Thank You, 2021 Work Party Volunteers!

The HOA does not have the funds to pay for regular professional maintenance along our common area pathways. We ask for neighborhood volunteers to help remove invasive weeds, blackberry vines, ivy, and other undesirable plants as part of our monthly first Saturday “work parties” (March-October). Volunteers also help keep the paths safe by removing leaves, fallen limbs, and trimming low hanging branches. Even though we have 156 households in our HOA, only about ten neighbors take part in these important tasks. The board would like to express our thanks to all who give their time to keep our pathway areas safe and attractive. You are appreciated!

If you can help with this important work, please email the Board or mark on the dues form that you would like to volunteer. You will be notified by email of the dates and times of scheduled work parties. *You do not need to participate in every session.*

The Board Taking Action

While we do not “police” the neighborhood, the Board *does* respond to direct (written) and specific complaints or concerns while maintaining the anonymity of the complainant. Our complaint-driven policy requires residents to take an active part in helping to enforce our CC&Rs, preserving the safety and quality of life in our neighborhood and maintaining our property values. Perceived issues must be brought to the Board’s attention in written form (email is fine) before we can investigate and respond. For safety concerns that require an immediate response, our phone numbers are listed in the newsletters.

Listed below are several concerns and requests responded to and actions taken during the past year:

- A 150 foot dead fir tree on HOA property next to the creek was removed after evaluation by an arborist and approval by the city. (The city has designated the creek area a protected natural area.) Another large dead fir next to the creek will also be evaluated and removed soon.
- The owner of a rental property on Windsor Circle will be contacted to remove various refuse piled up along the side of the house and a large PVC structure in the back yard.
- A homeless camper in our common area was contacted by several board members (and residents) and asked to leave. After hours of non-compliance, EPD was contacted.
- Concern over a long vacant property on Wilshire Lane, with a large dead fir tree in the front yard, has resulted in multiple (and ongoing) attempts to contact the bank that is the apparent owner.
- An owner on Wilshire Drive requested the Board’s approval to convert their garage into a bedroom. Other design approval requests came from new owners on Wilshire Lane for fences and a deck. Conditional approval was given for an owner on Windsor Circle to erect a canopy in their driveway. *(Any structure or modification of a home **must** be approved by the HOA Board, including temporary structures.)*

Complaints about poorly maintained yards, garbage and recycle bins not stored out of sight, and boats, trailers, and RVs parked in driveways or on the street, are received or heard throughout the year. The Board cannot respond or contact a property owner without an address. The best we can do is constantly remind residents in our newsletters of their obligations to respect our CC&Rs and maintain everyone’s property values. *The CC&Rs (Covenants, Codes & Regulations) for Somerset Hills I & II can be found on our website.*

Help Maintain Our Common Areas with a Donation!

In the last three years (2019-21), the HOA has spent over \$17,000 on the maintenance of our common areas. Most of this has gone to addressing trees that have been damaged by drought and storms. Our yearly dues are less than 10% of what most other HOA members in Oregon pay. Natural wooded areas and walking paths makes Somerset Hills a unique and desirable neighborhood to live in and increases our home values. Every year we have an arborist walk our path areas to identify possible hazards to path users or adjacent homes. Hazards are ranked by priority, and the Board tries to have all high-risk hazards removed, even when it means using reserve funds. Unfortunately, we have not had the funds to address medium and low hazards the past two years.

The Board is requesting that all homeowners who use the walking paths, enjoy the privacy and beauty of living adjacent to these greenways, or who simply want to keep our neighborhood safe and beautiful, to consider making a donation with this year's dues payment. Our goal is to raise at least \$3000 for needed common area maintenance with a suggested donation of \$25-\$50 (or more). As an incentive, donors of \$25 or more will be entered in a raffle for a chance to win a \$100 Fred Meyer gift certificate or a gift certificate for two to Trapdoor Escape Rooms (\$60 value). The raffle drawing will be held at the January 18th Annual Homeowners Meeting, but you do not need to be present to win. (Thank you to the Board members who donated these prizes!)

2021 Somerset Hills HOA I & II Budget Report

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Spent</u>
Property Taxes on Common Areas	\$65	\$63
Rental of P.O. Box for mail	\$120	\$134
Corporate Division of Oregon (non-profit membership)	\$50	\$50
Liability and D & O Insurance	\$1,950	\$1,830
Mailings/Newsletters/Website	\$550	\$375 (projected)
Annual HOA Member Meeting (no meeting held)	\$0	\$0
Annual Garage Sale advertising	\$25	\$40
Common Areas Maintenance - (Mowing, tree & limb removal, arborist's report)	\$4,500	\$6,300
<u>Miscellaneous Expenses</u>	<u>\$350</u>	<u>\$10</u>
Total =	\$7,610	\$8,802

Board Contact Information

James Carwile, President : 541-228-5408

Nola Colvin, Member-at-Large: 541-915-1480

Vacancy, Vice President

Diana Lamboy, Member-at-Large: 760-224-3351

Norm Hartig, Secretary : 458-205-1781

Michelle Manoly, Member-at-Large: 805-796-7184

Diane Peterson, Treasurer : 541-343-0861

Melinda Petersen, Member-at-Large : 541-515-4590

The Board can also be contacted by mail at *Somerset Hills HOA, P.O. Box 24836, Eugene, OR 97402*, or through our email address: *somersethillshoa@gmail.com*.