

NEWSLETTER

New HOA Board Members

Of the three vacancies on the Board of Directors, at the Annual Meeting only two homeowners were selected to fill vacant At-Large seats. They are John O'Loughlin and Randy Sands. One At-Large seat remains vacant. Any homeowner interested in assisting to preserve the community by joining the Board, please send an email to David Sager (davids4001@gmail.com). ❖

Ballot to Amend Covenants

Based on an April 2012 decision by the Maryland Court of Appeals that imposed liabilities to both owners and HOAs for damage caused by pit bull dogs, it appeared prudent to allow the HOA Board of Directors to determine that a particular pet might be a danger to other homeowners. An amendment to Section 8B of the HOA Covenants to do this was proposed. A Ballot was sent to all homeowners. These ballots were tallied at the recent Annual Meeting. Seventeen (17) ballots were received — fifteen (15) in favor and two (2) opposed. However, the Covenants specify that they may be amended only with the consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the homeowners. As there are sixty-four (64) homes, a minimum of forty-three (43) ballots was needed. Therefore, the amendment was not passed.

Maryland lawmakers recently announced plans to introduce legislation that would still hold dog owners responsible for damages, but it would apply to all dog breeds, not just pit bull dogs. The bill would also eliminate liability for landlords and HOAs. Hopefully such a bill will be passed in the near future.

Accomplishments for 2012

At the February Annual Meeting, a summary of the major accomplishments for the past year were presented. They are outlined below:

Architectural

- Guidelines for detached garages were approved.
- Projects approved: 1 detached garage, 1 shed

Landscaping

- The landscape service contract with Estes was maintained. They continue to perform well.
- Two dead cherry trees in the cul-de-sac on Abrams Court were replaced
- At the east entrance: The junipers were trimmed.

Communications

- Five HOA newsletters were published and distributed.
- The HOA web site www.bfmdhoa.org was kept up to date.

Other

- Trash removal.
- Justin Stine's Eagle Scout Project to revitalize the Riggs' family cemetery was completed. ❖

HOA Board Meetings

Regular Board of Directors meetings are held from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on the following dates: Thursday, April 18 (Hanson residence); Tuesday, June 11 (Stine residence); Wednesday, September 11 (Wesolowski residence); and Thursday, November 14 (O'Loughlin residence). All homeowners are welcome to attend. ❖

HOA Web Site

The Brookeville Farms HOA web site is located at <http://www.bfmdhoa.org/>. This site includes information pertaining to the HOA such as Architectural Review forms, minutes from previous board meetings, current and previous newsletters, as well as contact information for board members. ❖

Automated Enforcement

Montgomery County began installing speed cameras in school zones, residential zones and highway construction zones in 1997. There are several cameras in and around the Olney area.

The stretch of Route 108 between Olney Mill Road and approximately St. John's Episcopal Church was recently designated as a "Speed Camera Corridor." What exactly does this mean?

In Speed Camera Corridors, portable speed cameras (usually the size of a USPS mailbox) may be moved along the corridor as deemed necessary by the police.

Multiple speed cameras may be used at the same time along the corridor. Just because you've passed the camera you are used to seeing, don't think there can't be more!

There is no set amount of time for a speed camera to be in a particular location. They will be moved and added as the police deem necessary.

- Speed cameras will ticket a vehicle going 12 miles or more over the posted speed limit.
 - Violators must pay \$40 for the initial fine. No points are assessed for photo-enforced violations in Montgomery County. The violations are treated as civil and not criminal violations; insurance providers are not notified of these citations.
 - Any vehicle owner who receives a citation has the option to contest the violation at least five (5) days prior to the due date on the citation. Citations can be contested in Maryland District Court. Details are included on the back of each citation. In Montgomery County no mail in adjudication is performed; you must appear in court to dispute the fine.
 - Photo enforcement technology and processing systems mail the citation to the registered owner of the vehicle within fourteen (14) days for in-state plates and thirty (30) days for out of state plates.
 - If citations are not paid or contested, the vehicle's tags may be flagged or suspended.
- The Red Light Enforcement Program has been in effect in Montgomery County since 1997.
- Enforcement Cameras consistently work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - Citations will be given to automobiles that make a right-turn-on-red without stopping. Drivers must come to a complete stop before turning!
 - Citations may inadvertently be given to drivers that do not stop behind the white line. Be sure to give yourself plenty of room to stop so that your car does not cross the white line during a red light.
 - The registered owner of the vehicle will receive at \$75 civil citation for each incident. No points are issued against the vehicle owner's driving record and it will not impact insurance rates.
 - If the registered owner was not driving the vehicle at the time, he or she may request a court date and provide the court with the name of the actual driver. The court may or may not transfer the citation to the actual driver. Ultimately, the registered owner is responsible for the citation if the fine is unpaid.

- If you were in a funeral procession while running the red light, the vehicle owner should contact the funeral home. The funeral home should fax or mail a statement giving the details of the funeral and the information on the car(s) running the light. Upon receiving this information, MCPD may void out the citation.
- Failure to pay fines will result in the inability to renew the vehicle registration.

There has been some concern about the safety of red light camera use. The Insurance Industry on Highway Safety (IIHS), a non-profit organization that works to improve highway safety, notes that there are some studies that show that red light cameras do, in fact, increase rear-end crashes. These crashes, however, tend to be much less severe than the T-bone crashes that can occur when drivers run red lights. The number of T-bone crashes has reduced with the use of red light cameras.

Needless to say, speed cameras and red light cameras will not be going away any time soon. Several web sites offer a list of speed and red light camera locations in Montgomery county. You may visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov and search "automated traffic enforcement." You may also visit www.photoenforced.com.

The information used in this article comes from the Montgomery County Police Department and the Montgomery County Public Safety Committee. For additional information, visit them at www.montgomerycountymd.gov. ❖

Don't Skip Your Workout

Exercise is good for your body, of course. But it may keep your brain healthy as well, especially as you grow older. A study of more than 600 older people (average age 74) found that those who exercised three or more times a week for 30 minutes at a time were about 40 percent less likely to develop vascular dementia (associated with reduced flow of blood to the brain) than those who weren't as physically active.

Exercise didn't appear to have any impact on the subjects' risk of Alzheimer's disease, which is just one specific form of dementia, but those who did work out were generally less likely to develop difficulties with their thought processes.

It's a win/win situation, researchers say. Not only will regular exercise help you feel better as you age, but it may increase your chances of enjoying a long life with all your faculties intact. ❖