

# Community Newsletter

## Annual ARC Walk Through

*The annual walk through is scheduled for the weekend of July 25.*



The Board of Directors and the Architectural Committee have set July 25 and July 26, 2009 as the weekend they will perform the annual residents walk through. The purpose of this event is to evaluate the exterior of all of the houses and common areas to make sure that they are attractive and in good repair. A copy of the Walk Through checklist can be found on our website under 'Forms and Documents'. Everyone will get a letter by August 17, letting them know if there are any improvements that will need to be made and a recommended timetable for completing them.

Please remember that the members of the Architectural Committee are performing this event as they are required to by the Community Bylaws. Making sure the community is neat and attractive makes it easier for future residents to picture themselves here and for current homeowners to sell their homes when they are ready. If you feel we have made a mistake with your walk through evaluation, do not hesitate to contact the Architectural Committee at [ARC@furnacehills.org](mailto:ARC@furnacehills.org). We will send a member of the committee to discuss your letter with you.

### Walk Through Checklist

**Exterior Paint:** We're looking for good clean paint colors. We'll check both the trim colors and the base white to see that they look good. We'll also be looking to see if the color is one of the correct colors preselected for the community.

**Exterior Trim:** Here we are looking to see that the wood trim parts are not warping, splitting, cracking or pulling away from the house.

**Unusual Storage:** Here we are looking to see that there is no unusual storage of material in the front of the house: trash cans, bags of mulch, brooms, rakes, toys, bikes etc. We will also be looking at Satellite Dish placement. The dish should be on the roof or in the back, not in the front.

**Fence & Deck:** Here we are looking to see that the fence and deck are in good working order. No warped or splitting pickets, no missing handrails or broken stairs and that the colors match. We are also looking for new structures not approved by the Architectural Committee.

**Shed:** Here we are looking for the size and structure of the shed. It should be made of wood and the colors should match the house. Finally, it should also be in good working order, with no missing roof tiles or extensive damage.

***Download the checklist for the complete list.***

## THE BRADFORD PEAR TREES - A CAUTION FOR RESIDENTS OF PALMER AND SPALDING



**Top:** A full grown Bradford Pear on Palmer Terrace. **Bottom:** Branch weight causes them to break.

When the community was originally designed and created the landscapers chose to plant many Bradford Pear trees as part of the landscape plan. At the time, it was part of the recommended list for trees in Carroll County. Since then, further research has led the city government to remove the Bradford Pear from the preferred list of trees it recommends to builders.

The reason being is that as Bradford Pears age the weight of the branches become so heavy that the trunks cannot hold the additional weight and the limbs fall, sometimes without warning. The Homeowners Association is trying to develop a plan and hire a tree expert to help us remove these trees and replace them with younger healthier trees.

At this time, we recommend that residents of Palmer Terrace and Spalding Court learn to identify these trees and be wary of parking under any of the limbs. During inclement weather such as a thunderstorm or high winds, it is particularly necessary to stay away from these trees. It is our hope that we will have these trees removed by the end of the summer.

If anyone would like to assist the Landscape Committee with designing a plan to remove the trees and have recommendations for the types of trees that you would like to see planted within the community, please let us know by sending suggestions to the PO Box or via email at [BOD@FURNACEHILLS.ORG](mailto:BOD@FURNACEHILLS.ORG).

## CONCERNING THE ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS &amp; COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

It was mentioned above that the Furnace Hills Architectural Standards and Community Guidelines book was written in 1996 and approved in 1997. For the past few years, members of the board of directors have been discussing the possibility of updating this important document. This past April a new Board of Directors has agreed that the time has come to update this document. Improvements in house building techniques, improved synthetic materials and seeking to improve the way of life in the community has encouraged the board to take this next important step in our communities development.

At this time we are seeking volunteers from the community to help the board rewrite this document. If you have a suggestion for improving the community, please drop us a line at [BOD@FurnaceHills.org](mailto:BOD@FurnaceHills.org) or if you would like to be a part of this committee and help shape the future of Furnace Hills then please let us know.

We hope to examine the guidelines that pertain to exterior gym equipment, look for new community trim color options, structure the approval of synthetic decking materials, examine the allowance of synthetic fence materials, examine synthetic and aluminum trim

materials, rewrite the official satellite dish guideline and more.

Our hope is come together as a committee 3-4 times during the summer to outline the possible changes. After the committee agrees on what is going to be changed, they will then write the changes in order to seek approval from the board. Finally, the changes will be incorporated into the Architectural Standards and Community Guidelines book and a new copy of this book will be sent to the community by the end of the year. Let us know if you have an opinion or wish to participate in the committee.

## PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT DESTRUCTION AND RESPECT

One of the common complaints the Board of Directors receives is about area kids destroying community property, or leaving trash on common area, or bullying other kids in the community. Common courtesy has taken a beating nationwide. When kids or students feel it is OK to strike their teacher or beat up a bus passenger for alleged transgressions, we as a society have fallen far from common courtesy as a social value. Here in Furnace Hills local teens are regularly destroying the tot lot, or pulling branches off our community trees, or shouting vulgar and obscene dialogue at other children or adults that they do not like. What's more disturbing about this trend is that many parents of these kids either look the other way and say, "they are only being kids" or refuse to believe that their kids are among those that are causing community wide problems. In recent weeks, we have received emails of complaint about children playing ball on the common area and allowing their toys to strike fences, houses or vehicles in the community. It is the responsibility of the parents to cover any damage to property that gets damaged by your child.

Additionally, we are recommending to the entire community that they call the police if they are threatened or made to feel unsafe by another member of the community. The board would like to know about the incidents as well. We will keep a log and will send a member of the board to court should it come it.



*The tot lot receive a lot of wear and tear but also is a target for vandals: missing swings, graffiti, etc.*

## A REMINDER ABOUT FURNACEHILLS.ORG



Since we started the community website in September 2005, we've seen it change from time to time. We recently disabled the community bulletin boards on our website due to the increased number of automatic and obscene spam postings on the boards. It became too time consuming for the volunteer members of the board of directors to monitor on a regular basis. It is our hope that

we can use this site as the collection ground of information that all area residents (whether they be homeowners or leasing residents) can go to gather the information that they need when they would like it. We would like to update the community services section of the site with even more local area businesses that can offer the community good value and superior service for what ever they need. Did you know that you can submit an architectural application electronically through the website? We would like to encourage everyone to submit newsletter articles or article ideas to the board of directors for future newsletters through the website. This website is now and will always be

the best conduit to the Board of Directors. We do not have a central telephone number and will most likely not get one immediately in the future.

The fastest way to reach the board is by emailing us at [BOD@furnacehills.org](mailto:BOD@furnacehills.org). Additionally our P.O. Box is checked 2-3 times each week if you do not have internet access. If you have a suggestion on ways we can improve the website, please let us know. Provided it doesn't add significant dollars to the budget annually, we will consider it. We are here to serve the needs of the community and to help all of its residents live in a happy and healthy environment. We thank you all for your suggestions.

# A SHOUT OUT FOR HELP



Every year, the Board of Directors positions come up for election. This past May, no one from the community attended the annual meeting and therefore, the existing board is staying on until new board members can be found. It is important for other members of the community to get

involved. This ensures a new source of ideas and a progression of the community as a whole. We need to have new volunteers to continue to improve life in Westminster. We need to plant new trees, replace a tot lot and write new Architectural Guidelines so the community can grow and continue to be a model community in Westminster. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** If you can volunteer for the board or a committee please let us know. If you would like to know which board positions, chair positions and committees are available and what is required of those positions, please contact us at [BOD@furnacehills.org](mailto:BOD@furnacehills.org).

Thank you for your support!

## Calendar

### July 25-26, 2009

Annual Walk Through on all courts in Furnace Hills, Phase I

### August 11, 2009

New Board Elections - RSVP to [BOD@furnacehills.org](mailto:BOD@furnacehills.org) by Aug 4; Location to be determined

### August 25, 2009

First Day of School in Carroll County

### October, 2009

Watch for news about a Halloween costume contest.

### December, 2009

Watch for news about a Holiday decorating contest.