

ARNELL CREEK NEWS

WINTER 2023

BOARD REVIEWS '22 FINANCIALS

At its meeting on January 18, 2023, the Arnell Creek HOA Board of Directors reviewed the first draft of the HOA's financial reports for calendar year 2022. Treasurer Pat Manhard presented Board members with a 2022 Bank Deposits Report, as well as a copy of the HOA's checkbook register for 2022. This information was then fed into an Income and Expense Report for the year, comparing the actual numbers to the projections approved in the budget at last year's Annual Membership Meeting. The final component of the report broke down HOA funds between General Funds and various Restricted Funds (which include our Capital Improvement Fund and the Recreation Committee Fund).

In summarizing her reports, Manhard said, "The HOA is in good financial shape. Thanks to careful spending, we were under-budget for many of our anticipated expenses. We are now in a good position to talk further about investments and making needed repairs." Board members were quick to thank Pat for completing the reports and sharing them with the Board in such a timely manner.

The draft of the financial reports will next go to the Finance Committee for their review and comments. The committee, which includes community members Mark Diehl, Michael Incitti and Doug Murray, have the opportunity to examine supporting documentation for expenses and to offer suggestions for fiscal management and reporting. The financial reports will then be reviewed once again by the HOA Board, before being distributed to all property owners as part of this year's Annual Membership Meeting.



Photo Credit: Glenn Lash
After an absence of several years, snowmen were spotted in the Arnell Creek community last winter. To learn some tips for managing snowfalls and cold weather, check out the article on pages 4 & 5.

BOARD CANDIDATES SOUGHT

Elections for the Arnell Creek HOA Board take place at the Annual Membership Meeting held each May. Even though that meeting is still four months away, now is the perfect time to start thinking about "tossing your hat into the ring".

The Arnell Creek HOA Board is made up of seven persons, who serve staggered two year terms. Three positions will be voted on this year. One of the incumbents will not be running for re-election, so at least one new person will be joining the Board in May. "The Board meets six times a year: in June, July, September, November, January and March," said current Board President Glen Pruitt. "Sometimes we meet in person, and sometimes we meet virtually". Board members are expected to attend the Annual Meeting each May. Board members also serve on a Board subcommittee, which sets its own meeting schedule. "Yes, serving on the Board is a commitment of time and energy, but doing so is one of the best investments a homeowner can make in our community," adds Pruitt.

Persons interested in running for a Board position are encouraged to submit their name and a brief summary of their qualifications (no more than 200 words) to ArnellCreek@gmail.com. Deadline for applying is March 10, 2023.

ANNUAL HOA MEETING SET

The Arnell Creek HOA Board has set the date for this year's Annual Membership Meeting. The meeting will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2023 in the parking lot of the Pool House (9 Arnell Dr.). The meeting will start promptly at 10:00 AM.

BYOC: Bring Your Own Chair

Bottled waters will be available.

Look for your Annual Meeting mailing in your mailbox the week of April 24, 2023.

NEWS UPDATE



Holiday Lights: Our neighborhood was indeed keeping spirits bright with festively decorated lawns during December's "Light Up Arnell Creek" Holiday Lighting Contest. Congratulations to this year's winners: David and Michelle Carey at 44 Deerfield Lane (third place), Debbie Ronemus and Peggy Sander at 10 Zanes Court (second place), with top honors going to Sharyn Santel and Mary Ann Slinkman at 33 Deerfield Lane. Their display incorporated mannequins and live persons singing carols. Rumor has it that "liquid encouragement" also played a part in their success, but that you did not hear that from us! Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's contest. You all are winners in our eyes! Last, but certainly not least, we extend a special thanks to Joe Biliski who decorated the entrance to our community again this year.

Pool Clean-Up: They did their good deeds nine months ago, but it is never too late to show our appreciation. A big "thank you" to everyone who pitched in to ready the Pool House for last summer's Season of Swimming. That includes (in alphabetical order) Terri Bald, Rosemarie Cialini, Betty Eisenman, Kathy Hahn, Traci Humphries, Chris Leslie, Mike Mallon, Rhonda McManus, Chuck McNerney, Maryellen McNerney, Joy Murray, and Toni Walton. Our apologies if we missed anyone!

Invasion of the Spider Mites: It appears that spider mites were becoming a bit of a problem late last summer and into the fall season, both here in Arnell Creek and in our neighboring communities. Since spider mites are tough to spot with the naked eye, look for telltale signs of their activity. One indication is the presence of fine webbing, particularly on the underside of leaves and at branch intersections. When the weather warms in spring, spider mites emerge to feast on plants. This can weaken plants, making them susceptible to disease and other problems. Spider mites reproduce quickly, with each female laying hundreds of eggs. The resulting exponential population growth can cause a serious infestation in a matter of days or weeks. Be kind to your plants (and those of your neighbors) by treating outbreaks with insecticidal soap or Neem oil.

Proper Puppy Etiquette: The old saying is "a dog is a man's best friend". Make sure your dog is your NEIGHBOR'S best friend by following a couple of simple rules: (1) remember that you are responsible for your dog's behavior at all times, (2) keep your dogs on a leash when walking them through the neighborhood, (3) do not use the tennis courts as a dog pen for your dog when your kids are enjoying the playground, and (4) clean up after your dog, and dispose of their waste in your own trashcans.

Arnell Creek Pioneers: Were you among some of the first residents in Arnell Creek? If so, we would like to hear some of your stories about how this community got its start. What was it like in those early days? How has the community changed over the years? It might make for an interesting story in a future issue of "Arnell Creek News". Drop us a line at ArnellCreek@gmail.com or call Glen Pruitt at (302) 562-2553.

ARNELL CREEK HOA BOARD of DIRECTORS 2022 – 2023

Glen C. Pruitt
President

Margaret Colvin
Vice-President

Maureen Meloche
Secretary

Patricia Manhard
Treasurer

Terri Bald
Stu Bruce
Rosemarie Cialini
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Contact Us By Email at
ArnellCreek@gmail.com

Or by Regular Mail at
**Arnell Creek Homeowners
Association**
P. O. Box 95
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971

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YOUR HOME VALUE MAY BE GOING UP ...AND YOU MAY SOON BE FEELING IT IN YOUR WALLET

The housing market has certainly been strong for the past couple of years. Even stable communities such as Arnell Creek have seen more homes than usual go on the market, and for those homes to sell quickly at the asking price (or higher!) Clearly people put a great value on the homes in Arnell Creek! Within the next year or so, Sussex County Government will value them more, too.

Sussex County has begun conducting a reassessment project to update property assessments from a base year of 1974, providing an efficient technical process with current, accurate property values. The purpose of conducting the reassessment is to comply with a Delaware Chancery Court ruling in 2020 that found property taxing systems in each of the state's three counties to be unconstitutional and not in keeping with Delaware law. The reassessment process is being conducted by Tyler Technologies, nationally recognized experts, which will survey approximately 182,000 properties over a three-year period. New assessment values are being set at what is projected to be the fair market value of the property (i.e. the amount the property could be sold for) as of July 1, 2023.

Property owners should be on the lookout for data collectors from now through late 2023. The data collectors will be making their way through Sussex County, measuring improvements on each property and collecting data. They may also ask residents/occupants several questions about a property. The purpose is to get as much information about a given property so their teams can accurately compute every parcel's value. Once the data have been collected, each property owner will receive a data mailer with the information that was collected for verification of accuracy. Property owners are asked to notify the County if any errors are present, or if assessors missed some other pertinent information. This is a critical step in any transparent reassessment process. Accurate information ensures the most accurate value for your property.

Once all information is collected and data mailers have been returned and reviewed, Tyler Technologies will then analyze the data. Property owners will receive their tentative assessment notices in the fall of 2023. Property owners should follow the instructions on the informal notice to review their tentative property values and schedule an informal review if necessary.

Once the assessed value of a property is established, a corresponding tax bill will be generated in 2024. While it is too early to determine whether the value of an individual property may increase, decrease, or stay the same, there will be multiple opportunities to appeal your property's valuation if it appears to be too high, including through both an informal and formal process.

During the last two weeks of September 2022, Tyler Technologies held public presentations in five locations throughout the county, as well as a virtual meeting. A recording of the virtual meeting can be views at

https://sussexcountyde.gov/sites/default/files/videos/SussexCounty_ReassessmentVirtualPublicMeeting_20210927.mp4.

For more information on the Reassessment Project, visit Tyler Technologies webpage at <https://empower.tylertech.com/Sussex-County-Delaware.html>, or call the Sussex County Assessment Office at (302) 855-7824.



SUNDAY, MAY 21 - 2pm
Contact
Rosemarie Cialini
by text at
610.675.9896 or
romickey2@gmail.com
to register
FREE & FUN COMPETITION
CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

TIPS FOR SURVIVING EXTREME COLD WEATHER & SNOWFALLS

Weather this time of year can be very unpredictable. This year the meteorologists reported that Sussex County experienced one of its warmest Januaries on record. However, on February 1, we woke up to our yards (nearly) covered with snow. And last year, on January 28, we experienced a blizzard and received fourteen inches of snow within a 24-hour period! You never know what kind of weather you'll get, but here are some tips to know to make any cold weather event a bit safer.



Around Your Home

- ◆ Make sure your ceiling fan rotates clockwise (while looking up at it) during the winter. Since heat rises, the temperature near the ceiling is greater than at floor level. This is particularly true in houses with high ceilings or those with heating systems that do not circulate the air. Set properly, your ceiling fans can gently circulate hot air that is trapped near the ceiling, as well as reduce cold drafts near the floor.
- ◆ Frozen pipes can lead to burst pipes. Before that happens, disconnect and drain all garden hoses and cover outside faucets with insulating foam covers. Then turn off the water to outside faucets, if possible, and open valves on the faucets to let them drain.
- ◆ Clean your gutters and downspouts before cold weather arrives to prevent ice from forming in them.
- ◆ Knock down all icicles hanging off your gutters, your roof line, or over your porch. People are injured by falling, sharp-ended icicles every year. Don't be one of them!
- ◆ Please be mindful of drifting snow that can block exhaust vents from your heaters and clothes dryers. Blocked vents can allow carbon monoxide (a colorless and odorless gas) to build up within your home and cause injury or even death.

With Your Car

- ◆ If you have a garage and you have enough clear space in it, park your car inside it before the snow starts falling. Consider backing your car in, which makes it easier to drive out if snow accumulates in front of the garage door.
- ◆ Here at the beach, snowfalls often begin with a time of freezing rain. If you park your car outdoors, put your windshield wipers up so that they do

- ◆ not get frozen to the glass.
- ◆ Take the ice scraper out of your car and bring it indoors. You do not want it to be in your car if your car gets iced over.
- ◆ Keep the gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- ◆ Before driving your car, remove as much snow and ice from its surfaces as possible. That includes the roof and trunk lid! Snow or ice clumps may dislodge as you drive, creating hazards for other drivers on the road.
- ◆ Keep a bag of kitty litter in your trunk. If your car gets stuck in the snow there's no need to panic. Sprinkling some kitty litter at the base of your tires can provide the extra traction you need to get things moving again. Plus, the added weight in your trunk will also create greater pressure on your tires, increasing their contact with the ground.

On Your Property

- ◆ If you use a de-icer on your sidewalk or paved driveway, use it sparingly. Remember that it's only supposed to break the bond to make shoveling easier; it's not supposed to melt it all.
- ◆ The sooner you can apply an ice removal product, the better. Head out right as the snow or ice starts, and sprinkle a thin layer on sidewalks and steps to prevent a sticky buildup.
- ◆ When selecting a snow shovel, look for a lightweight model that has an ergonomically designed handle with a "D" grip on the end. A curved handle will allow you to stand more upright to help alleviate any strain.
- ◆ If you have a fire hydrant in front of your house (or close by), shovel 3 feet by 3 feet out from around the hydrant.
- ◆ Most people think that the best way to shovel snow is to scoop, lift and toss the snow by the shovelful. Unfortunately, this method is more likely to lead to overexertion and injury and isn't going to get the snow removed any faster than the correct method. To shovel properly, make multiple passes at the snow as it falls, trying to keep up with the snowfall so that you are shoveling 2 to 3 inches at a time. Using your shovel, push the snow across the surface from which you want to remove it. Do not lift or toss.
- ◆ If you **MUST** toss the snow with your shovel, remember to lift with your knees. Better yet, hire a young person to do your shoveling and let **THEM** lift with their knees!

In The Streets

The Arnell Creek HOA contracts with a company to remove snow from the streets in our community, when necessary. During significant snowfalls, they will work to keep one lane open at all times for use by emergency vehicles. Once the snow has stopped, they will come back to clear the roads more completely.

- ◆ Be patient. The snow removal company will work on our streets as soon as they can.
- ◆ Refrain from approaching the snow plow. There can be limited visibility around the machines, and we do not want any of our residents to be hurt accidentally.
- ◆ Do not park your car on the streets until they are plowed. That gives the snow removal company more room to work, allowing them to clear the road surfaces more completely.

The best tip we can give you? In the event of extreme cold weather and snow, stay home, sip on some hot chocolate, and enjoy the snowy views outside your window!

STAY SAFE!

OLD LANDING ROAD CONTINUES BEING THE FOCUS OF DEVELOPMENT

Over the past few months, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) has performed some mapping and marking work in our area, particularly at the intersection of Warrington and Old Landing Roads. It appears the Old Landing Road (OLR) improvements are being somewhat accelerated, and some other projects are being newly considered. The two other projects at the south end of OLR will certainly impact traffic volume on the road.

THE FOUR-WAY STOP INTERSECTION: As previously reported in “Arnell Creek News”, DelDOT has proposed a compact roundabout be installed at the intersection of Warrington and Old Landing Roads (Project # T202204306.) The Old Landing Road Coalition surveyed the communities along Old Landing Road, and it found there was strong opposition to the proposed roundabout. An overwhelming percentage of residents in the community prefer some sort of signal be installed instead.

Deputy Director and Chief Engineer Shanté Hastings reports that DelDOT is now beginning the conceptual design for this project. Conceptual design includes obtaining a topographic survey and utility designation, developing alternatives, estimating costs / impacts / benefits and doing community outreach. The schedules listed in the implementation plan are subject to change based on working with affected property owners, community outreach, and utility coordination to name a few. “The project description listed for the project is from the original studies done, which is why the roundabout is [still] mentioned for Old Landing/Warrington,” explains Hastings. “We will evaluate different options and present them at a public workshop to get input. We will send flyers to alert residents of workshops. You can also sign up to automatically receive alerts for DelDOT public meetings in Sussex County. The selected alternative will determine the construction duration, so we won’t know that until design is further along.” Construction of any improvements to the intersection is likely several years away.

OSPREY POINT: A multi-use commercial project is being planning for the property formerly known as the Old Landing Road Golf Course. The developers submitted an application (CZ 1973) to Sussex Planning and Zoning (P&Z) to add a commercial marina, tiki bar, restaurant, kayak launch, and beach area. There was no public support at the public hearing held about the application. In fact, there was quite a bit of opposition, with a number of very good points made against allowing the project to go forward. The outcome of that meeting: “In relation to C/Z 1973 Osprey Point Preserve, LLC. Motion by Mr. Mears to defer action and hold the record open for receipt of the DNREC decision regarding the Marina, seconded by Ms. Wingate and carried unanimously. Motion carried 5-0.” At this point DNREC has not made a decision or scheduled a public meeting or hearing regarding the marina.

BAYSHORE COMMUNITY CHURCH: More recently, a four-acre parcel of land along Old Landing Road was sold to Bayshore Community Church. The parcel, located at 20376 Old Landing Road, is zoned AR-1, and building a church on a property zoned AR-1 is considered appropriate use. The plan calls for a 400 seat church with 160 parking spaces. The owner submitted an application to the Board of Adjustment, seeking approval of a commercial daycare on the property, one that would operate Monday – Friday, 6:00 AM to 5:30 PM, caring for approximately 60 children. The daycare center would also require a playground.

An initial hearing was held on December 19, 2022 that focused solely upon the commercial childcare center. There was no support for the project, with approximately ten persons testifying in opposition. The attorney representing the Church requested the record be left open until the next hearing on February 20, 2023. At that time, the church will come back to the Board of Adjustment with a more detailed plan of the site. The final Site Plan will have to go before the Sussex County Planning and Zoning Office, where state agencies will weigh in regarding the roadway, entrance, stormwater management, etc. Certainly this plan will add a tremendous amount of traffic, particularly on Sunday mornings, that may make traveling on OLR more difficult. The location of the proposed church is between two curves, which escalates the safety concerns. This site also contains wetlands, resulting in stormwater management concerns for neighboring communities, due to the large amount of impervious surfaces the project adds.

WHAT’S NEXT? “These projects are certainly of interest to all of us,” says Donna Voigt, Director of the OLR Coalition. “We are going to need to be vigilant to stay apprised of developments, and most importantly the public hearing. I’m subscribing to the hearing notices using the link that Shante provided. I would encourage others to do the same.”

Use this link to sign up for DelDOT alerts: <https://publicmeetings.delaware.gov/#/subscription>. Review the informational packet and listen to the audio recording of the Public Hearing on the Bayshore Community Church project: <https://sussexcountyde.gov/board-adjustment-meeting-1318> Email any comments about the Bayshore Project to the Sussex County Board of Adjustment to pandz@sussexcounty.de.gov by February 14, 2023. If you have not already done so, sign up for time-sensitive emails from the Arnell Creek HOA by sending your email address to ArnellCreek@gmail.com.

RECREATION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES 2023 EVENTS

Read that headline again. Just to be clear... the Recreation Committee is not announcing two-thousand-plus events for this year. They are announcing their events for calendar year 2023! Here are some of the exciting events coming up in the new few months:

Sunday, May 21, 2023: Community Cornhole Tournament. It's a FREE, friendly competition to be held on the grounds of the Pool House at 9 Arnell Drive. Winners earn bragging rights, as well as getting their picture on the front page of the summer edition of "Arnell Creek News". To reserve your team's place in the tournament, contact Rosemarie Cialini by calling or texting at (610) 675-9896 or by email at romickey2@gmail.com. Please include Team Name, the names of team members and a contact phone number. Check-in the day of tournament starts at 1:00 PM, and the competition begins at 2:00 PM.

Sunday, May 21, 2023: Potluck at the Pool. Celebrate the coming Summer Season with a time of food and fellowship around the Arnell Creek Pool. Bring your favorite finger foods or snacks to share. The fun begins at 4:00 PM.

Saturday, June 10, 2023: Community-Wide Yard Sale. This is an annual event for our community. The HOA will handle the publicity, but we need the participation of many households to make the day a real success. So clean out your closets and make some extra cash! The posted hours will be from 8:00 AM until 12:00 noon (but we all know the True Yard-Salers start showing up around 6:30 AM!)

Thursday, July 20, 2023: Family Craft Day at the Pool. Last year's Craft Day was a big hit, both with the regular kids and the Big Kids! Join in the fun with this year's craft project. We supply the materials, and you supply the creativity. Meet us at the Pool House at 10:30 AM.

Still In the Planning Stages: The Recreation Committee is still finalizing the details for an **Arnell Creek Happy Hour(s)**, another Community-Wide Yard Sale later in the year, and **Movie Nights** this Fall. You can always check the Calendar of Events on the HOA webpage for the latest listing of fun things to do in our community.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Architectural Review Committee: One more person is needed to serve on the Board committee that reviews homeowner requests for additions or changes to the exteriors of their homes.

Pool Clean-Up Team: Sign up for this one-time volunteer opportunity to be scheduled in early May. Help with some light cleaning and organizing to prepare the Arnell Creek Pool House for the Summer Swimming Season. Many hands make light work!

Landscaping Committee: A great opportunity for people with a green thumb or simply a strong back! Help with weeding, pick up sticks or help make decisions about how to keep the Front Entrance to our community looking its best.

Pool Crew: Now in its second year of operation, the team of volunteers take turns walking through the Pool House at dusk each day, making sure things are put away and locked up for the night, as well as reporting any issues that need attention. It typically takes only ten minutes or so, but it is an important part of maintaining our pool facilities. Last year we had enough volunteers that individuals were assigned only one night a week. We could also use a couple of volunteers to substitute, when needed.

These volunteer opportunities are a great way for individuals to keep Arnell Creek a very pleasant community in which to live. If you are interested in helping, please email your name and contact phone number to the HOA at ArnellCreek@gmail.com, or call Glen at (302) 562-2553.



KEEPING THE WAY CLEAR HELPS TO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

On Thursday, December 27, 2022, a portion of the Arnell Creek community experienced an electric outage that lasted several hours. A crew from the Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC) responded to our calls, and they restored the power for us. However, their work was hampered --- and the power outage lasted longer --- because the crew had difficulty accessing DEC equipment in our community.

As a result, DEC representatives later toured Arnell Creek to examine their equipment. They found fifteen pieces of DEC equipment, scattered on properties throughout the community, which were not easily visible or accessible. In some cases, restoring access to the equipment was as simple as pruning some low hanging branches or removing some mulch. A couple of cases required some drastic action. One transformer was 100% obscured by bushes and not visible at all from the roadway. Another transformer was blocked by tree growth that would prevent the opening of its door in the event of an emergency. Furthermore, tree roots were heaving up the transformer, potentially damaging it in the future. Most likely DEC will have to de-energize a larger portion of development to work on this particular piece of equipment.

On January 3, 2023, Brian Fooks (DEC Operations Supervisor) contacted the Arnell Creek HOA with the list of the equipment that needed attention. The HOA immediately drafted and mailed letters to the homeowners who might need to be involved in resolving the problems. (The letters were also emailed to those homeowners for whom the HOA had a current email address.) The typical protocol is for the DEC to send a certified letter to the Homeowners Association, giving it seven days to resolve the problem. Brian's phone call gave us some advance notice (and gave the homeowners a little more time to act). The good news is that Arnell Creek homeowners were quick to respond. Because so many of our homeowners are proactively addressing the problems, the seven-day deadline to resolve the issues will be a soft one. As of January 18, access to nine of the 15 DEC pieces has been fully restored, and two are partially restored. The HOA is continuing to follow up with the other remaining four homeowners.

As a reminder to all homeowners, DEC also provided this message:

- ◆ *Shrubs, trees, and flowers planted near energized DEC equipment create a significant hazard that our employees must work around to inspect equipment safely and thoroughly, or to restore power in the event of an outage. This vegetation can also conceal our equipment, making it difficult for crews to quickly locate it, especially at night.*
- ◆ *Thankfully, this hazard can be prevented with your help. Please keep in mind that planting or installing anything within ten feet (10') in front of and within five feet (5') of the sides or rear of DEC equipment is prohibited by our Terms and Conditions of Service. The need for clearance around transformers and other electrical infrastructure is also explained on labels attached to DEC equipment.*
- ◆ *For the safety of our crews, and to support the quick restoration of powers, we respectfully ask that you inspect the shrubbery and other vegetation in your neighborhood to ensure that it is in accordance with DEC's policies. If you find any plant or item within ten feet of DEC equipment, we ask that you please remove them as soon as possible.*
- ◆ *Please note that if DEC needs to access a piece of equipment that is impeded by vegetation, our employees will remove the vegetation to ensure safety at the cost of the individual homeowner. To ensure safety for all, please call 811 first to have underground lines marked before the removal process.*
- ◆ *Questions or concerns can be directed to Brian Fooks, Operations Supervisor at DEC. He can be reached by telephone at (302) 349-0719 or by email at bfooks@delaware.coop.*

DEC requires all transformer boxes to be clear of all landscaping as follows:

- 5 foot clearance from the **left** of the transformer
- 5 foot clearance from the **right** of the transformer
- 5 foot clearance from the **rear** of the transformer
- 10 foot clearance from the **front** of the transformer
 - NOTE the front of the transformer *typically* faces the street and can be located by looking for DEC stickers and a locking mechanism

