

ARNELL CREEK NEWS

SPRING 2022

Annual Meeting Set for May 14

The Arnell Creek HOA Board has set the date for this year's Annual Membership Meeting. The meeting will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2022 in the parking lot next to the Pool House (9 Arnell Drive). The meeting will start promptly at 10:00 AM.

"We met in the parking lot last year, and everyone seemed to enjoy it," explains HOA Board President Glen Pruitt. "In fact, it was requested during last year's meeting that we do it this way every year!" The decision to meet outdoors last year was driven by the Board's desire to host the meeting in compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols. As you may remember, the 2020 Annual Meeting was canceled altogether due to the pandemic.

Of course, there are some challenges with meeting outdoors. "We are at the mercy of the elements and the venue," Pruitt added with a smile. "The meeting will be BYOC: Bring Your Own Chair! While there is some shaded areas in the parking lot, you may want to bring suntan lotion or wear a hat if it is particularly sunny. It was a little difficult to hear everything last year, so we hope to have a better sound system this time."

If there is inclement weather on May 14, the meeting will be moved to the next day, Sunday, May 15 beginning at 2:00 PM. Any postponement will be announced by email (if the HOA has your email address), and it will be posted on the HOA website.

The official notice for the Annual Meeting will be sent by "snail mail", in compliance to the Arnell Creek By-Laws. The by-laws state that the notice of the meeting (and the supporting documents) must be mailed to each voting member "at his or her last known Post Office address at least ten (10) days, and no more than twenty (20) days, prior thereto". The packets, which will contain a meeting proxy, a ballot and the invoice for the 2022 HOA fees, will be mailed on Monday, April 26, 2022. Copies will also be posted on the HOA website.



**Not Getting the HOA E-Mails?
Keep in the loop with time-sensitive announcements**

**Sign up for the
Arnell Creek HOA
Email Distribution
List!**

**Simply send
your name, home address and email address
to ArnellCreek@gmail.com.
We will take care of the rest!**

There will be a full agenda for this very important meeting. We will celebrate the achievements of the community during the past year, but we will also discuss the challenges that lie before us in the coming year. As a group, we will review the HOA Financial Report for 2021 and vote on a budget for 2022. The community will elect at least two new members to the Board. Finally, there will be time for a Question and Answer session at the end of the meeting.

In order to conduct business at the Annual Meeting, the HOA must have a quorum. The by-laws sets that number to be one-third (1/3) of the voting membership, which in our case is the owners of 46 properties in the community. If you will not be able to attend this year's meeting, please send in your proxy! Further instructions will be included in the packets that go in the mail on April 26.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This issue is the third “Arnell Creek News” I have put together since being elected to the HOA Board. The first issue, which came out in August 2021, was six pages long. The second issue, which came out in November 2021, was EIGHT pages long. Both issues were dense in content. I thought to myself, “Glen, you gotta lighten up some! People want a newsletter, not an academic journal!”

The snowfall on January 3 was going to be the inspiration for this newsletter. Everyone loves snow, right? We can throw in a photo of a cute snowman, maybe include a recipe for making snow ice cream. The issue will be light and fun! Then along came January 28 and 29. Eastern Sussex County experienced a blizzard, with fourteen inches of snow and high winds that created snow drifts two feet or higher. Governor Carney declared a state of emergency, and roadways were closed for twenty-four hours to all but emergency vehicles. Snow suddenly became serious business. Very serious.

The good news is that we got through it all. Neighbors with snow blowers helped neighbors who struggled to clear their driveways by hand. People with a shovel cleared the snow away from elderly neighbors’ mailboxes. GreenTop Lawn & Landscaping took care of clearing the roadways within our community. The HOA contracts with them, and then we seek reimbursement for the cost from the State of Delaware. We are reimbursed 75% of what we spend, but only after submitting an application form with supporting documentation (copy of the invoice, copy of the check, and proof from the bank that the check has cleared). And then we wait for the money. Yes, Snow is Serious, and Snow is Work, at least now from my perspective as Board President.

So, “snow” is OUT as the newsletter theme, and “light” is IN! In this issue of “Arnell Creek News”, you will find a recap of our inaugural “Light Up Arnell Creek” Holiday Light Contest, an article about the street lamps that are scattered around our community, and the introduction of solar panels into Arnell Creek. These articles are in addition to our regular stories about the activities of the HOA.

In these dark days of rising prices and escalating military actions around the work, we all could use a little more light, don’t you think? Go out there and let YOUR light shine!

Glen



ARNELL CREEK HOA BOARD of DIRECTORS 2021 – 2022

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Contact Us By Email at
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Or by Regular Mail at
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Association**
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New Pipeline Brings Natural Gas Service to Our Community's Border

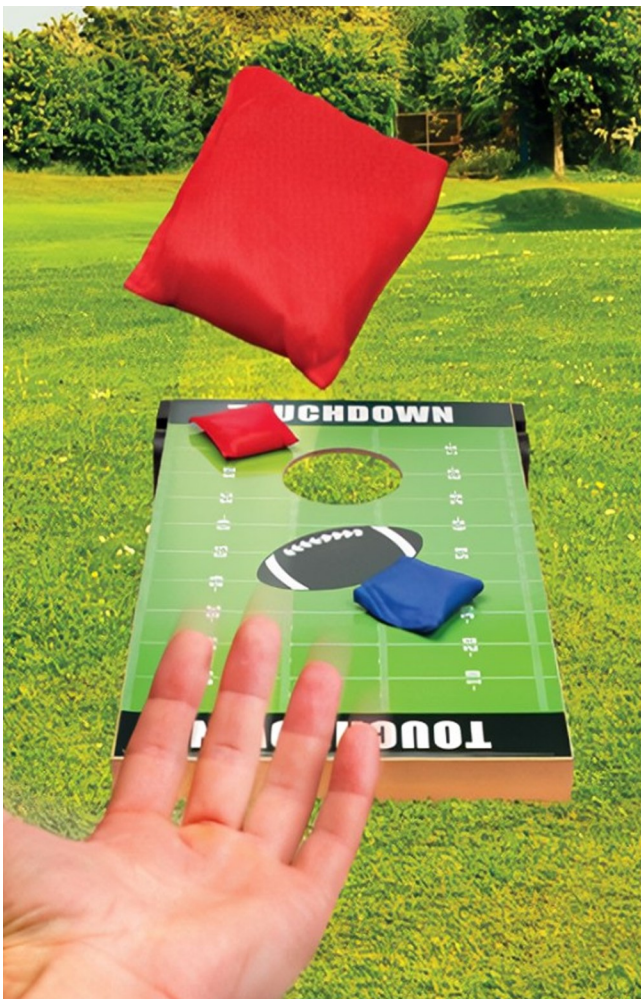
During the first three months of 2022, Chesapeake Utilities has been working to install a new natural gas pipeline on the southern portions of Old Landing Road. That project required them to do some digging on the western side of the roadway, and it caused single lane closures on the road in the areas where they were working. Thank you for your patience and cooperation during those times! Chesapeake Utilities estimated that the work would be completed by mid-March, and it looks like they are staying true to their projections.

The possibility of bringing natural gas into Arnell Creek itself was addressed at the Annual Meeting several years ago, as well as in the last several issues of "Arnell Creek News". Even though the pipeline is almost completed, there still is time for our community to hook up to it, if there is sufficient interest. Arnell Creek homeowners can use an online survey to say "Yes, I'm interested" or "No, I am not interested". Chesapeake Utilities requires about forty more homeowners to express interest in the service before it would be willing to do a feasibility study specifically for Arnell Creek.

It would be helpful to have a majority of our residents complete the survey, regardless of their interest. The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/arnellcreek>. (If you completed the survey previously, you do not need to do it again.)

If you have not made up your mind yet, Chesapeake Utilities will be hosting a virtual information session on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at 7:00 PM. Chesapeake representatives will provide an overview of their services and answer any questions you may have. To participate in the meeting, log onto www.zoom.us, click on "Join A Meeting", enter the Meeting ID# 845 7138 7417, click "Join" and then when prompted, click on "Open Link". [A direct link to the Zoom Room can also be found in the calendar on the homepage of the Arnell Creek website.]

The Arnell Creek website (www.arnellcreekhoa.com/general-8) has an entire page devoted to this issue with lots of background information. Simply click on the "Natural Gas" tab! Questions can also be submitted to Sales Representative Kelley Gabbard at emailing kgabbard@chpk.com or by calling (302) 363-0581.



Cornhole Tournament **Sunday, May 22, 2022** **Lawn at the Pool House**

Team Check-In: 1:00 – 1:45 PM
Tournament Play starts at 2:00 PM

Cash Prizes for top three winning teams

Refreshments will be available

Pre-registration is required by May 15, 2022
Fee: \$20 for a team of two
(Free registration for the first two teams
whose players are both under the age of 15)

To register, contact Rosemarie Cialini
by text or email at (610) 675-9896.

Include Team Name, Participants'
Names, Address, and Contact Phone Number.

Making The Community Light Bills a Little Lighter

One of the larger expenses of the Arnell Creek community is its electric bill. Actually, the Arnell Creek HOA gets THREE electric bills each month: one for the electric service at the Entrance Sign, one for electric service at the Pool House, and one for the street lamps throughout our community. Over the past three years, Arnell Creek spent an average of \$5,765 a year for electric costs.

Over the past few months, the price of virtually everything has increased, in some cases dramatically. Groceries, fuel, and materials now cost significantly more than they did one year ago. Unfortunately, the Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC) was not immune from the cost pressures created by the largest increase in inflation in three decades. As a not-for-profit utility, DEC decided to pass those costs along to its members. During a virtual public hearing on February 16, the DEC board approved an adjustment to that portion of the electric bill that reflects changes in its cost of purchasing power supply called the Power Cost Adjustment or "PCA". The overall impact of this adjustment has resulted in an eight percent rate increase. The power cost adjustment (PCA) increased from \$0.013 per kWh to \$0.023, adding approximately \$10 per month to the average residential member's bill (1,000 kWh per month). The rate increase went into effect on March 1, 2022.

The Arnell Creek HOA Board is working with DEC to bring down the community's electric costs, particularly for the street lamps in our community. First, the HOA requested that the Cooperative complete an inventory of the street lamps. Currently there are 31 street lamps scattered throughout the community. Of these, four of them have LED bulbs, and 27 lamps have traditional bulbs.

The HOA then signed a contract with DEC to convert the 27 traditional lamps to LED lights as soon as possible. Unfortunately, it may take six to eight weeks to complete the work. However, it is our understanding that the conversion will be done at no cost to the HOA, as long as we commit to remain customers of the Delaware Electric Cooperative for at least three more years. The good news is that LED light bulbs are significantly more energy-efficient than traditional bulbs. By converting to LED bulbs, we can expect to reduce the number of kilowatt hours billed to the HOA by 35% per month. It is our hope that, even with the rate increase, we will end up paying less for electricity each month.

A Good Book is Now Easier to Find

Whether you are curled up on the sofa on a cold winter night or lying on a beach blanket on a hot summer day, a good book may be just the thing you need. Fortunately, Arnell Creek has had a "Little Free Library" in the heart of our community, close to the Pool House and Playground, for the past several years.

The Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization founded in 2012. It strives to build community and to increase access to books through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free book exchanges. There are more than 100,000 Little Free Libraries around the world, in more than 100 countries and all seven continents. In a recent survey, the organization found that 92% of the people who use a Little Free Library say their neighborhoods feel like a friendlier place as a result.

While the libraries may be little, they offer a big selection of titles. A quick look at the books currently in the Arnell Creek library include titles by such well-known authors as Tom Clancy, David Baldacci, Anne Rice and John Grisham. A sci-fi book by Frank Herbert sits on the shelf next to a romance novel by Danielle Steel. How about a good mystery, like [The Cat Who Had 60 Whiskers](#) by Lillian Jackson Braun? Or some self-help advice from Stephen R. Covey in his book [The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People](#)?

The books are available to anyone who wishes to borrow one, free of charge and on the honor system. So stop by and borrow one (or two), and feel free to leave a book you have enjoyed. Happy Reading!



Arnell Creek was Merry and Bright for the Holidays

December 2021 was a bit lighter and brighter in Arnell Creek, thanks to the many residents who decorated the exterior of their homes so beautifully for the holiday season. A special “thank you” goes out to the seventeen homeowners who entered the inaugural “Light Up Arnell Creek” Holiday Lighting Contest. Everything looked so festive!

The contest was the brainchild of the Recreation Committee, under the leadership of Chair Rosemarie Cialini. The committee members wanted to do something to celebrate the holidays in a socially distanced but fun way. Holiday lights outside seemed to be just the thing! Homeowners could do their own thing at their own time, but everyone would be able to enjoy the results. The committee decided on the categories for the competition and put together gift baskets for the winners. Just as importantly, they realized that judging light displays is a rather subjective process. They wisely recruited judges from outside the community who would not know the competitors and could judge the displays without bias.

The winners were announced by email on December 15, 2021. The lucky contestants were Margaret Colvin & Bob Hughes (9 Michael Court) for Most Creative Use of Lights, Ron & Betty Beach (31 Deerfield Lane) for Best Yard Display, and The Rachel Webster Family (50 Deerfield Lane) for Best in Show. All the winners were surprised and delighted by their wins.

No one was more surprised, however, than Joe Biliski. He did not even know he was in the competition! The Recreation Committee gave Joe a special award, the Community Spirit Prize, for the incredible job he did decorating the entrance to our community. He has decorated our community spaces for many years now, and each year is better than the year before.

The response to the contest from the general public was overwhelming positive. One Arnell Creek resident wrote, “That was SO cool. Congrats to the winners, and thank you to the committee for your energetic spirit in ‘revitalizing’ the neighborhood mood!” The word spread outside Arnell Creek, too. A resident from a neighboring community shared that she went out of her way to drive through Arnell Creek, just to admire the beautiful lights and yard displays. Chances are quite good that the contest will be repeated again this year, so start designing your designs now!

Solar Panels Coming to Some Arnell Creek Rooftops

At its meeting on March 16, 2022, the Arnell Creek HOA Board approved applications from two homeowners for the installation of solar panels. These applications were the first of their kind to be considered and approved by the Board.

Since 2008, hundreds of thousands of solar panels have popped up across the country as an increasing number of Americans choose to power their daily lives with the sun’s energy. Improvements in technology have brought down the cost of adding a solar energy system to a home’s roof. Furthermore, there are a number of grant programs and incentives offered by the State of Delaware and the various electric companies.

While there’s no one-size-fits-all solar solution, here are many resources online that can help you figure out what’s best for you. Here are a couple of links to help you get started:

<https://news.delaware.gov/2016/04/29/tips-for-homeowners-considering-solar-lease-or-power-purchase-agreements/>

<https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/climate-coastal-energy/renewable/participating-contractors/>

By reducing or eliminating your electricity bill, taking advantage of federal tax credits, increasing the value of your home, and much more – going solar is an option worth exploring.



LAST CALL for Directory Updates

Soon it will be time to print the 2022 edition of the Arnell Creek Phone Directory. This handy guide contains the names, addresses and phone numbers for the residents of our fair community. In recent years, we have even added quite a few email addresses.

Please review YOUR listing in the Directory, and send any changes or corrections to ArnellCreek@gmail.com. Deadline for submitting information is April 30, 2022.

By-Law Revision Meeting Set for April 21—Virtually

Good governance of a Homeowners Association includes a review of the organization's guiding documents on a regular basis. The Arnell Creek HOA will be reviewing all of its documents this year, beginning with the HOA's set of by-laws. The by-laws set the fundamental rules by which the HOA Board operates. It appears that the Arnell Creek HOA By-Laws have not been updated since June 1999!

In the last issue of "Arnell Creek News", we extended an invitation for residents to review the current by-laws and to offer comments and suggestions for changes. We heard from several homeowners (thank you!), and now we want to continue that conversation. Glen Pruitt and Margaret Colvin will be hosting a Zoom meeting on Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 7:00 PM for interested persons to discuss the comments.

To join the meeting, all you have to do is click on this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84695833318?pwd=bHN2N05RTFh5MINIM0pta082RW1Mdz09>

The link can also be found in the Calendar of Events on the Arnell Creek HOA website. If you need it, the Meeting ID# is 846 9583 3318, and the Passcode is 587984.

The current by-laws can also be found on the Arnell Creek HOA website, on the "Forms" page. If you have any questions or comments before the meeting, please email ArnellCreek@gmail.com.

3 Cs: Common Community Concerns

Life in the Arnell Creek community is peaceful, for the most part. When residents do express concerns, however, they tend to be the same ones over and over again. So, at the risk of being redundant, we repeat these important reminders:

- If you are walking your dog in the neighborhood and your dog has "to do his business", pick up your pet waste and take it home with you.
- If you are walking at twilight or in the dark, consider wearing a reflective vest or light-colored clothing, or carrying a bright flashlight.
- Pedestrians are always encouraged to walk as close to the left side of the road as possible. When you can both see and hear an oncoming car, you can better judge the car's path.
- The parking lot by the Pool House is intended for use by persons using the pool, tennis courts or playground. In the off-season, there generally is not a problem with people using the lot for auxiliary parking for a few hours. However, the parking lot should not be used for extended parking and should not be used habitually.
- The parking of trailers is prohibited in the community. That includes in the driveway of individual residences, along the community streets or in the community parking lot.
- Trash cans should be stored so that they are not easily visible from the street in front of your home.

HOA Dues Increased

At the Annual Membership Meeting held on May 15, 2021, the community approved a \$50 increase in the membership dues.

Homeowners will continue to pay an annual fee per lot of \$250.00 (an amount that has not changed for many years.) However, for fiscal years 2022 and 2023, homeowners are expected to pay \$100 towards the community's Capital Improvement Fund. Therefore, the total amount due per lot is \$350.00 for the next two years.

In some ways, this increase has been a long time in coming. At the 2019 Annual Membership Meeting, the community voted to approve a \$25.00 per year increase for a two-year period (fiscal years 2020 and 2021). The increase was needed to replenish the Capital Improvement Fund, which has been depleted by the major improvements just completed on the swimming pool and Pool House. However, the HOA Board later decided to waive the increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase would have been implemented in the first few months of the pandemic. There was a great deal of uncertainty then, and the Board wanted to be sensitive to the financial uncertainties faced by the community residents.

Homeowners should remember that the increase is temporary. The higher amount was approved for only two fiscal years. If the community takes no further action, the total amount due per lot per year will revert to \$300.00 for fiscal year 2024.