

ARNELL CREEK NEWS

SUMMER/FALL 2024

THE CARNIVAL WAS CARNI-FULL OF FUN!

It is not every day that you see a fire truck pull into your community and spend a couple of hours there. Don't worry, there was no need for alarm this time! The Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Department sent over one of its trucks for the Arnell Creek Carnival that was held on Saturday, August 10, 2024.



The Carnival was the idea of the Arnell Creek Recreation Committee. They wanted to host an event that brought residents together for some family-friendly fun. They certainly had all the right ingredients! They had games such as a golf-putting green, a tossing game, a roulette wheel, and a couple of guessing games. Even better, there were prizes! Better yet, there was free ice cream and soft pretzels. The best of all was the fire truck, with giveaways from the Fire Company and free photos with Sparky, the Fire Dog. Adding to the fun was

the number of kids who stopped by to check out what was going on.

The one thing that was missing, thank goodness, was RAIN. Hurricane Debby was a slow-moving and erratic Category 1 hurricane that caused widespread flooding across the Southeastern United States in early August 2024. At one point, Debby was predicted to come to Sussex County on August 10. Yes, the day of the Carnival! Fortunately, Debby was even more erratic than the meteorologists thought, and its path shifted much further to the west than predicted. While some rain fell overnight on Friday, mid-day Saturday turned out to be sunny with temperatures in the low to mid 80's, a perfect day for the event.

A big thank you to all the members of the Recreation Committee, especially the Carnival Co-Chairs Barbara Lancour and Maryellen McNerney!

The Recreation Committee is planning more events for the months to come. Some of them may be "pop-up events", when they identify fun activities in the community that our residents might enjoy. The best way to stay "in the loop" is to make sure you are on the Arnell Creek Distribution List (if you are not, just send an email to the HOA and ask to be added) or to check the Calendar of Events on the home page of the Arnell Creek website (www.ArnellCreekHOA.com).

2024 PHONE DIRECTORIES ARE READY

Being distributed with this issue of "Arnell Creek News" is the updated Phone Directory. It includes phone numbers for nearly every homeowner in the community, as well as email addresses for those homeowners who requested to have that shared. The information reflects what the HOA had in its records as of July 30, 2024. The directory is an excellent tool for getting to know your neighbors... and it sure comes in handy if there is an emergency in the neighborhood. This year's cover is a bright orange, sure to please all you pumpkin spice lovers out there! Special thanks goes out to Bruce and Giancarla Churchman, who helped with the layout and had the directories printed as their gift to the community.



ONE IS NEVER BORED ON AN HOA BOARD... OR ONE OF ITS COMMITTEES

The Board of Directors for the Arnell Creek Homeowners Association is made up of seven persons who own property in Arnell Creek. These homeowners donate their time and skills to help “take care of the business of the community”. They are elected to two-year terms. However, there is nothing to prevent them from running for re-election. In fact, we encourage it!

That being said, the attrition of Board members is a naturally occurring event. People step away from the Board for a wide variety of reasons. That certainly happened to our Board earlier this year, when four people left the Board at the end of May. Sometimes they move out of the neighborhood, as was the case of Patricia Manhard (We will miss you, Pat and Greg! Good luck in Wilmington!) Sometimes people who have served for a long time may step aside to allow others to get involved, and sometimes people decide not to run again to focus more time on other areas in their lives. That was true for Terri Bald, Margaret Colvin and Maureen Meloche. We said it at the Annual Membership Meeting, but it bears repeating: THANK YOU SO MUCH for all four of these people and their service to our community!

Attrition is not necessarily a bad thing. It actually can be a Very Good Thing. It presents us with an opportunity to bring new energy and new perspectives to the Board and its work. We were fortunate to have four new people join the HOA Board on June 1, 2024. They were Gary Lancour, Mary Frances Martin, Paul Murphy and Matt Patton. In fact, three of them were elected to serve as Officers this year: Matt as Vice-President, Mary Frances (“M.F.”) as Secretary and Paul as Treasurer. Congratulations! We look forward to seeing how you will enrich the work of the Board during your time with us.

The next Board election is only eight months away, and it is very likely that two or all three of the “experienced” Board members will be ending their service on the Board. If being a Board member interests you, we encourage you to get involved in one of the Board committees. It is an excellent way to learn more about how things are done with the HOA. It is also a great way to meet and work alongside your neighbors. We are currently looking for additional members for the Architectural Review Committee, the Finance Committee, the Facilities Management Committee and the Landscape Committee. To learn more about these groups, contact HOA President Glen Pruitt at (302) 562-2553 or email the HOA at ArnellCreek@gmail.com.

BOARD MAKES FINANCIAL REPORTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Did you ever get the year-end HOA financial reports at the Annual Membership Meeting and say to yourself, “Gee, I wish that I didn’t have to wait an entire year to see how the HOA is doing financially”? Well, we have some good news for you! The wait can now be shorter, if you only ask.

At four of its six meetings each year, the Board gets a report from the Treasurer of the income received and expenditures made by HOA so far in that calendar year. During its July meeting, the Board voted to make the interim financial reports available to homeowners upon request. “This decision is another step forward for the HOA in being transparent in its activities,” said Board President Glen Pruitt. “Over the past several years, the HOA has become much more intentional and inclusive in how it makes decisions and spends money.” Currently homeowners have to wait five months or more between the close of the fiscal year and the date of the Annual Membership Meeting before they can see a financial report. Starting in October 2024, homeowners can request the financial report approved at the most recent Board meeting. “The Fall is a great time to request one,” added Pruitt. “That report would give homeowners an idea of what has been going on with the HOA for the first six or seven months of the calendar year.”

Homeowners can request a financial report by emailing the HOA at ArnellCreek@gmail.com or by contacting any member of the Board.



ARNELL CREEK HOA BOARD of DIRECTORS 2024 – 2025

Glen C. Pruitt
President

Matt Patton
Vice-President

**Mary Frances
Martin**
Secretary

Paul Murphy
Treasurer

Stu Bruce
Rosemarie Cialini
Gary Lancour
At Large

Contact Us By Email at
ArnellCreek@gmail.com

Or by Regular Mail at
**Arnell Creek Homeowners
Association
9 Arnell Drive
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971**

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NEXT REPAIR PROJECT COULD BE BACK IN OUR COURT

As a community, Arnell Creek is lucky to have amenities that can be enjoyed by our homeowners and their guests. They include a swimming pool and Pool House, a playground, tennis courts, and open green space. All of these are found at the common area at 9 Arnell Drive, right in the heart of our community. Over the past several years, we have put some energy and money into maintaining and improving these amenities. In the Fall of 2018 and the Spring of 2019, we did a major overhaul of the swimming pool itself. In 2021, we completely re-imagined and rebuilt our playground. Last year, we leveled and put a protective coating on the concrete around the swimming pool, preserving the integrity of our swimming pool for years to come.

That leaves the tennis courts, which are looking a little worse for the wear. The courts are used nearly year-round by tennis players and pickleball players alike. To the best of our knowledge, there has never been any comprehensive repair or resurfacing of the courts since they were installed (or if there was, it was a LONG time ago)! Volunteers have filled in small cracks in the playing surface over the years, extending the life of the courts. At this time, however, there is extensive and deeper cracking (over 700 linear feet) in the asphalt. Smaller repairs will have to be done more frequently and even then, they will not keep up with the deterioration of the surface.



The HOA Board is currently meeting with contractors to review the facility and to make their proposals and estimates. There appears to be three possible repair options that can be considered:

- **Crack Repair:** Small crack repairs will continue to last 6 – 12 months, but the courts will continue to have an uneven surface that will impact ball bounce and player safety.
- **Resurfacing:** A court resurface will last one to two years. The top layer of our current asphalt is compromised, and cracking will continue despite the repairs and additional material installed on the playing surface. This is just a “larger band aid” than crack repair only.
- **Mill/Pave:** By removing the top 1.5” of asphalt and paving a new layer, the courts will once again have a smooth and level playing surface. This solution will last ten years or more. It will also provide the opportunity to add permanent pickleball courts to our facility.

If nothing is done and the courts remain in their current condition, cracks will continue to grow larger, and a Mill/Pave process will be necessary in the near future.

As we shared during this year’s Annual Membership Meeting, the cost for repairing the tennis court is estimated to be between \$30,000 and \$80,000. It will depend on which option and which contractor is chosen. To put that in perspective, the HOA Board priced out these repairs a few years ago, during the supply chain shortages created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and one of the estimates came in at more than \$100,000! The Board will consider costs and the HOA’s current financial resources when reviewing the proposals in the next few months. We will also provide an opportunity for the community to give feedback before a final decision is made. It is our hope that the repair work can be scheduled for April and May 2025, so the refurbished facility will be available for use starting next summer.

ANNUAL POTLUCK at the POOL

The BOARD OF DIRECTORS
supplies the burgers, hot dogs
and drinks...

YOU supply the side dishes
or dessert!

Saturday, September 14
4:00 PM at the Pool

COMMUNITY-WIDE YARD SALE

Clean out your garage, shed, attic
and basement, and line your
driveway with your no-longer-
needed treasures, then head to the
bank with your proceeds!

Saturday, September 21
8:00am-12 Noon

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF: COMPUTER SECURITY

These days it is hard to imagine Life with Internet access. However, it was not that long ago the Internet was available only to a Chosen Few. It was on April 30, 1993 that the World Wide Web was released to the broader public. It revolutionized the internet and allowed users to create websites filled with graphics, audio and hyperlinks. We certainly have come a long way in the past three decades. Today you do not need a computer to “surf the Net”. It can be done on your phone, on your television, or on a touchscreen in a public place. Sometimes you do not even need to TOUCH anything. Just ask your question aloud, and Siri or Alexa will be glad to get the information you want within seconds. Unfortunately, the sharing of all that information also provides opportunities for unscrupulous persons to try to get a hold of YOUR personal data without your knowledge or permission. Fortunately, there are things you can do to prevent that (or at least make it more difficult to do.)

Up-to-date Antivirus and Anti-Spyware Software – Antivirus programs scan everything that goes into your computer — including email, discs and data files — searching for thousands of known viruses. Anti-spyware programs monitor your computer, watching for programs that try to install themselves without your knowledge or permission. To remain effective, these software packages requires regular signature updates in order to identify and prevent emerging threats. Therefore, it is important to acquire antivirus and anti-spyware software and set it to update automatically.

Operating System Updates – Operating system updates are released to fix known vulnerabilities in software that are subject to potential exploitation by hackers. These updates improve the usability and performance of your computer while providing added security against attacks. Therefore, it is important that your operating system updates are set to install automatically.

Turn On Firewall – Your firewall operates as a security checkpoint that information must pass through before it can enter or leave your computer. It is an extra line of defense against viruses, spyware and other malicious attacks on your computer. You should ensure your firewall is turned on at all times.

Use Encryption – The internet is a public network that is accessible by users around the world, which makes it by no means private. Any files transmitted via the internet are subject to ‘eavesdropping’ or interception by unknown parties. Therefore, in order to protect your privacy, encryption will jumble your information using a complex algorithm that can only be unlocked by anyone to whom you send the decryption key.

Use a Privacy Screen When in Public – Fraudsters often engage in shoulder surfing in order to see what is happening on your screen. In order to protect your privacy when in public, use a privacy screen and be aware of how close other people are to you, especially when viewing sensitive information.

Scan External Devices – When attaching any external devices (e.g. flash Drives, external hard drives, etc.) to your computer, it is suggested that you perform a scan for malware that could infect your computer. This is especially important if you have been downloading files or the device has been in contact with other computers. This will prevent the malware from spreading to other uninfected files on your PC.

Password Guidelines- Your password grants access to your accounts and by extension, your personal information. Therefore, it is important to do the following:

- Use strong passwords of at least eight characters that include upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols. Phrases and other non-obvious combinations are harder to guess.
- Change passwords at least every 30 days. Changes should be significant – adding an incremental number, month or year may not be sufficient.
- Do not use the same passwords for multiple accounts, especially not for banking and other sites that contain sensitive information.
- Keep passwords safe. Avoid writing passwords or sharing them with others. A password management tool is suggested if you become overwhelmed.
- Avoid using sensitive information in your passwords.
- Enable input masks when typing passwords. This will change characters to dots or stars to prevent others from seeing what you type.
- Avoid being too descriptive in your password hints. This will make it harder for fraudsters to guess.

Protect Your Home Wireless Network

- Change Your Router’s Preset Password – Wireless network devices are sold with default passwords that



are known or publicly available to hackers. To prevent unauthorized access, change the default name to something unique and obscure that follows the password guidelines listed above.

- Don't Broadcast Your Network Name – Your Server Set Identification (SSID) is your network name. Anyone wishing to connect to your network must know the SSID in order to connect. If you disable SSID broadcasting, your network won't be visible to outsiders.
- Change Default Network Name – Wireless devices are sold with default user names that may share important information about your network. Suppliers of wireless devices publicly list the default usernames and corresponding passwords to make it easy for customers to configure their network. The default network name basically offers no security, so it should be changed immediately.
- Enable Encryption – Be sure to turn on the encryption capabilities on your router so all the data sent across your network is scrambled when being viewed by an unauthorized user. This provides an added layer of security if a hacker is able to access your network.

Online & Mobile Precautions

- Avoid Clicking Pop-ups and Banner Ads – Pop-ups and banner ads may have spyware or viruses embedded within them that could slow your computer or give fraudsters access to your PC. To get rid of a pop-up, always click the close icon. Never click 'Agree', 'I Accept' or 'Okay' to close the window.
- Don't Check Remember Password Option – If you check the "remember password" option, anyone who has access to your phone or computer will be able to login to your accounts. These passwords are sometimes not securely stored and can be found in plain text in your files, allowing fraudsters to share your information. This applies even more when using public computers or portable devices, which can be lost or stolen.
- Don't Email or Text Personal or Financial Information – Avoid sending credit card numbers, passwords, social security numbers and other sensitive information via email or text message, as they can be easily intercepted.
- Use Caution When Downloading or Opening Attachments – Be sure to only download files and open attachments from reputable sources that you trust. It is not unusual for downloads to include viruses and spyware. Be especially wary when downloads, links and attachments are unsolicited or free.
- Turn on Spam Filters – Your spam filter captures unwanted advertisements and other junk emails in a separate folder so you can review them at a later date or have them deleted automatically. Spam emails that are blocked may contain viruses, spyware and phishing attempts that will be quarantined, keeping your other files safe. Keeping your spam filter on will help protect you from external attacks on the internet.
- Pop-up Blocker – Your pop-up blocker prevents unwanted pop-up advertisements from filling your computer screen. In addition to being distracting and reducing productivity, pop-ups may contain viruses and spyware that are activated just by clicking in the pop-up window. Enable your pop-up blocker to add some preventative security.
- Turn Off Wi-Fi – Enabling your wireless devices to connect automatically to wireless networks provides some convenience but is also a huge security risk. Doing so may allow your wireless device to connect to unsecure networks created by hackers to capture your username and password and steal your information. With your 'auto-connect' option enabled, hackers may be able to set up peer-to-peer network with your device in order to gain access to your files. Manually connect to wireless networks when necessary.
- Disable Geotagging and Mapping Functions – Geotagging broadcasts the exact latitude and longitude or your current location, which may share your home address with the public. Also, geotagging will let criminals know when you are away from home, an opportune time to break in.
- Do Not Enable File Sharing – File sharing allows members of your network to access and download files from your computer or cell phone. This is risky for many reasons. File sharing software may make you more susceptible to an attack since they require certain ports to be open, which act as a back door to your computer. Shared files may include malware and grant public access to your personal information.
- Log Out Immediately – You should log out immediately after accessing your online banking or any other account that contains sensitive information. If you leave your account logged in after completing your transactions, anyone with access to your computer will be able to use your open session to get to your personal information. So just to be safe, log out after you complete your transactions on any site that requires username and password access.
- Lock your Screen w/ PIN, Password or Pattern Security – With all the portable devices we use these days, there is a very likely threat of theft. Once a criminal has your computer or cell phone, they will have access to all the information stored on the device in addition to the usernames and passwords for your online accounts. Locking your screen with a PIN or password will provide an extra layer of security to protect your information.

FOUR-WAY STOP AND AIRPORT ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

As reported earlier, no changes will be made at the intersection of Old Landing and Warrington Roads until AFTER Airport Road is extended to Route 24. What is the status of that project? Here is the most recent update from DeIDOT staffer John Gaines: "We are in the Preliminary Engineering stage. Preliminary Construction Plans have been submitted for department-wide review. The critical path for the project will then be getting to the Semi-Final Construction plan stage, which allows us to develop the Final Right-Of-Way Plans that we have scheduled for completion at the end of 2024. The project schedule at that point will be in the hands of the Acquisition Agents. Given the impacts of the project, I would think it will take 1 ½ - 2 years for the completion of the real estate acquisitions. Only then can we advertise and prepare for construction. All of that said, we are about three years from the start of construction activities from right now. [DeIDOT} will also have another Public Workshop when we get to the Semi-Final design stage so we can share an update on actual impacts."



PLANS FOR BEAUTY SALON ON OLD LANDING ROAD HITS A SNAG

On July 10, 2024, the Sussex County Planning & Zoning Commission held a public hearing on a request for a conditional use of land in an AR01 Agricultural Residential District on Old Landing Road. A beauty salon is being considered for the property at 19747 Old Landing Road. It would be located on a parcel of land 2/10 mile north of the entrance to Arnell Creek, on the opposite side of the road. The salon would be connected to an existing building, and it would include chairs, a hair-washing station, reception and waiting areas, and up to five employees. The salon would service about 20 clients per day at most.

The proposal brought more than 35 comments in advance and a few during the public hearing itself, much more than the recent average. The comments were split about 75 percent in favor and about 25 percent against. Opponents to the request cited concerns about the safe flow of traffic into and out of the salon parking area, and the potential danger to pedestrians and residents. There were also concerns about setting a precedent for businesses to "creep into residential areas."

The Planning & Zoning Commission voted to defer action on the request until a future meeting, to allow more time for the commissioners to consider the testimony received. At press time, it appears that the request has not been put on the agenda for any upcoming P&Z meeting.

SHORTER DAYS MEANS MORE TIME UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

With the coming of the Autumn months, the hours of sunlight each day will get fewer, and the nights will get longer and longer. Even with the streetlights in the community, Arnell Creek can be a dark place to be. We encourage you to be careful out there! There are no sidewalks in our community, so watch out for people walking along the sides of our streets. And if you are doing the walking, wear light-colored or reflective clothing, carry a flashlight, and walk "against the traffic".

Homeowners may want to consider adding floodlights on their homes, particularly lights that are motion-activated. It is a cost-effective way to improve the security of your home on those long dark winter nights.

HOA BOARD SEEKS CONTRACTORS FOR SERVICES

Volunteers handle many of the tasks necessary to keep Arnell Creek and its Homeowners Association running smoothly. That includes everything from serving on the Board of Directors to pulling weeds in the flower beds, from repairing cracks in the tennis courts to managing the HOA website or writing the HOA newsletter. It really is a matter of homeowners pitching in to help in whatever ways they can. We appreciate that more than you could know!

There are some tasks, however, that goes beyond what we can expect volunteers to do. Each year the Board signs contracts with different companies to cut the grass in the Common Areas, to service our swimming pool in the summer months, and to plow the snow from the streets when needed in the wintertime. We have been fortunate to work with some good companies over the years. To be good stewards of the HOA funds we handle, the Board plans to put those services out for a competitive bid this fall. Doing so gives other companies a chance to provide these services, while allowing the HOA to make sure it is getting the best value for the money it spends. The Board did that this summer with its insurance policy for Directors and Officers Liability. As a result, we got an equivalent policy from a reputable company at a 23.4% savings from our old policy.

If you would like to suggest companies for us to consider for lawn service, snow plowing, pool servicing or general carpentry, please share with us the business name and contact information. You can email the information to us at ArnellCreek@gmail.com or give it to any member of the HOA Board.