

# SOMMERVILLE NEWS

**SPRING 2022**

Sommerville Owners' Association, PO Box 9, Seaford, VA 23696  
<https://sommervilleowners.weebly.com/>

## **SOMMERVILLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Paul Barnard, President  
Geoff Swanson, Vice-President  
Chris Betcher, Member-at-Large  
Samantha Call, Treasurer (non-voting)  
Marci Swanson, Secretary (non-voting)

### **COMMITTEES**

Architectural Review, Derek Coldiron  
Beautification, Joyce Frink  
Hospitality, Cheryl Barnard & Jean Grinnell  
Welcoming & Neighborhood Watch, Frank Lane

## **2022 UPCOMING EVENTS**

**June 4 – Neighborhood Yard Sale** -- 8 to 1  
**Neighborhood Picnic** – 2 to 5  
“The Lot” at Ludlow & Sir John  
(Rain Date – June 11)

**June 30** – Summer assessment due

## **Paul Barnard, President**

I am happy to report that much has been and is being accomplished by the many volunteers who serve on the Board and numerous Association committees. I believe that this is a strong indication of the health of our Association when so many are willing to step up and volunteer their time and energy in bettering our neighborhood. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes that is often overlooked or not visible to the Membership. I would like to thank all that do volunteer their time and energy in making Sommersville a wonderful place to live and raise a family.

**Assessments Increase:** During the April's BOD meeting, the Directors voted to increase the Association assessments by 10 percent in agreement with ARTICLE IX, Section 3, of our Covenants. This is necessary to meet the increased cost of many services and expenses of operating and maintaining the Association. The last increase was back in 2016/2017. Effective with the June Assessment, Assessments will be \$163.85 semi-annually; an increase of \$14.85 semi-annually.

**Articles of Incorporation (AOI):** Working with the Association's Attorneys, (Thomas, Adams, and Associates) the Board was able to reestablish our Articles of Incorporation in January. Per Virginia Code, all HOAs are required to be incorporated. This is important for many other reasons to include liability of the Association. The original Articles of Incorporation were allowed to expire in 2015.

It is Important to note that the Articles of Incorporation, both the original and the new, formally lists the name of our Homeowners Association as Sommersville Homeowners Association, not Sommersville "Owners" Association. As a result, all Association correspondence and documents going forward will be in the name of Sommersville Home Owners' Association.

**New Website?** The Board is looking to update and improve the Sommersville's website; <https://sommervilleowners.weebly.com> We are asking for a volunteer(s) who have both the experience and time to assist the Board with updating, improving and or possibly changing our current Association website to a new design. If interested, please get in contact with one of the Board members.

## Paul Barnard (Continued)

**Sommerville411:** Sommerville411 is the Association's official FaceBook Group page for posting all Association business and meeting notices. Our Secretary, Marci Swanson, often posts York County and Hampton Roads community events of interest that benefit all. Additionally, the Board will post important documents from time to time that seek Owner review and comments. Please check the Association's FB page frequently to stay informed about your Association happenings and notices.

**Promise to All Owners/Members of the Association:** Members of the Board of Directors are working hard as volunteers ourselves with the discretionary time we have available to improve and make Sommerville a friendly, neighborly, and great place to live and raise a family. We promise open communication with all Members, to be transparent in all we do in managing the Association business, and to put the best interest of Sommerville above all else. This includes being good stewards of our financial resources and taking our fiduciary responsibilities seriously. We will objectively and fairly follow and adhere to our governing documents: the Covenants, the By-Laws, and the newly adopted Guidelines, Rules & Restrictions in all we do. Please feel free to contact any member of the Board at any time with your questions, concerns and or suggestions to improving our Association. We welcome and value everyone's input and comments. Thank you all for your support.

## GEOFF SWANSON, Vice-President

Spring has sprung in Sommerville and so has our new information board. James River Signs recently completed the installation of the marquis style sign board that should provide for much more visible messaging as well as the added durability of professional weather-proof construction. The hospitality committee has agreed to take on the role of managing the messaging and display. If any member has any information they believe pertinent to share community wide, within reason, please contact any board member or Hospitality Committee chairperson Cheryl Barnard.

On the mosquito fighting front, York County Mosquito Control recently introduced a hearty stock of mosquito fighting fish into our pond. *Gambusia holbrooki* are considered native to this region and are commonly found in tidal areas and streams. They are related to guppies, and are a hardy fish able to tolerate winter, over-crowding, and poor water quality. This project was completed at no cost to the association. Stocking the pond with more fish suitable for sport fishing has been explored but would require a sizable investment from the association; one estimate was for about \$1500-\$2000. The board decided against this given current budget constraints. If there is enough interest, this project could be explored in future budget processes.

Quite a few members have been asking for an update about the status of the unimproved right of way/vacant lot opposite the intersection of Ludlow Dr and Sir John Way. I am disappointed to inform that our attempts to obtain the ownership of this parcel have so far been unsuccessful for a myriad of reasons. As many have commented, the adjoining property has changed ownership and survey crews have been seen working along the property lines of some of our neighbors on Sir John Way. The board is keeping an eye on the situation and working to stay informed.

## **GEOFF SWANSON (Continued)**

Lastly, onto everyone's least favorite topic, Covenants, and restrictions. The overwhelming majority of noted covenants violations have been and continue to be the prolonged parking of trailers on lots. Spring is here and many are using utility trailers to complete projects around the house as well as those with boats and RVs preparing for the boating and camping season. As a reminder, trailers are permitted temporarily and should be moved to a proper storage/parking location when not being used. Also, the board has received multiple complaints lately that can best be described as trivial and involve minor disputes between neighbors. We kindly ask that before any complaint is made to please review the Covenants and Bylaws to see if the issue falls within the scope/control of the Association. Additionally, many times when a complaint is received concerning another member, we will ask if any attempt has been made for the issue to be addressed between neighbors before bringing the issue to the board. Often, board involvement escalates a situation to an unneeded/unnecessary level when a simple neighborly conversation is all that is needed.

See you all at the beach,

Geoff Swanson, SHA VP

## **Treasurer Update**

The Board would like to give a big thanks to Samantha Call who stepped up to fill our vacant Treasurer position in March. She is energetic and financially very savvy. Sam is leading the effort to transition us to Quick Books Online that will help automate and simplify much of the financial transactions, accounting, reports, and tax filing. The Association is very fortunate to have Sam managing our Association finances.

### **Samantha Call – Treasurer**

We have made a successful transition from QuickBooks Pro/Excel to QuickBooks Online (QBO) as of March 2022. The integration of our bank accounts with QBO has improved automation, reconciliation, and overall financial posture of our Owners Association. Our accounting firm also has full transparency into our QBO account to assist with any issues that may arise.

Assessments will be sent out no later than 31 May 2022 and due no later than 30 June 2022. QBO will allow for invoices of semi-annual assessments to be distributed electronically. The upcoming assessments mailing will allow homeowners to select their preference of invoice delivery for future assessments. Additionally, QBO gives us the ability to process payments using all major credit cards (Apple Pay, Visa, Mastercard, Discover and American Express), as well as bank ACH transfers along with the option to pay with a physical check. (After conversations with PayPal and Venmo, it was determined that the transaction fees are too high at 2.89 percent plus \$0.49 per transaction or 1.9percent plus \$0.10 per transaction respectively. Additionally, Venmo does not allow for non-profits to create business accounts, placing the burden on an individual versus the Association.)

All Sommerville Owners Association bank accounts have been successfully consolidated to Wells Fargo as of 15 April 2022. Lastly, two debit cards from Wells Fargo were issued to the Board President and Treasurer to automate recurring expenditures, such as supplies and the QBO monthly fee. All expenses will continue to be approved by the board prior to purchase and receipts will be maintained within QBO.

## COMMITTEE NEWS

### Hospitality Committee

Cheryl Nelson Barnard and Jean Grinnell, on behalf of the Association, send out congratulatory cards and gifts to Sommerville parents on the occasion of a birth of their new baby. Additionally, we send condolences to those families who have lost a loved one with a small plant and sympathy card. Over the last twelve months, we have provided six new baby gifts and sent out two condolences to Sommerville families. The Hospitality Committee requests that our neighbors let us know of births and as well as deaths when they occur so that we may also reach out to our neighbors. Feel free to contact us on FB or call us direct. Appreciate your help with this important community effort!

### Welcoming Committee

Frank and Marie Lane, on behalf of the Association, welcome all new Owners to the Sommerville neighborhood. Over the last twelve months, the committee has provided seven welcome baskets. It's the Association's goal to greet and get to know each new Owners as they move into our neighborhood and join our community.

### Beautification Committee

The Board had nine additional sprinkler heads installed along the Sommerville median to allow for additional landscaping along the entrance. The Committee is planning ways to enhance the entry ways.

**Sommerville Volunteers:** The Board would like to invite any Owner who has the time and energy to volunteer on any one of our many committees. It is a great way to serve your Sommerville community and become involved. If interested, please contact any member of the Board and let us know what your interests are. It is also a great way to become familiar with the Board if you are so inclined to run for a position on the Board in the future. There is still much work to be done to better our community and improve the Sommerville neighborhood.

## Architectural Review Board

Simone Hurley, who served as our ARB Committee Chairperson for the last year, is stepping down as our Chairperson. Simone was thoughtful, diligent, and thorough with all requests submitted to the ARB during her tenure. The Board would like to sincerely thank her for a job well done! Derek Coldiron has volunteered to serve as our Chairperson. He comes to the position with experience serving on ARBs in other communities. He is joined by two new volunteers – Carolyn Dawson and Greg Fisher-- who will join Derek, Mike Vaughan, and Linda Halverson on this important Committee.

Just a reminder: All ARB requests must be submitted either by USPS or email. Please review the Covenants and the recently adopted "Guidelines, Rules and Restrictions" before submitting your ARB request to ensure your request is in compliance with our governing documents. The ARB Request Form can be downloaded from the SHA website: <https://sommervilleowners.weebly.com>

Spring has sprung with flowers and pollen. Now is a great time to power-wash siding, shutters and front porches before the summer heat arrives.

## Paul Barnard -- Covenants Review Committee

Thirteen volunteers have been meeting twice a month since February 2022 to assess and review the current Covenants, which were last updated on January 11, 2017. We are carefully and thoughtfully reviewing each and every Article/Section to determine if changes or updates are needed or desired. We are also addressing new requirements such as solar panels and EV charging stations. With few exceptions, the Committee has been more inclined towards providing additional time and flexibility to many of the guidelines and restrictions that currently exist. Consensus is reached before any change/update is accepted in Committee. The purpose of the Covenants Review Committee is to:

- Review each Article/Section for clarity and consistency.
- Remove ambiguity and provide objective, well defined standards for both the Board and Owners to follow.
- Incorporate the "Guidelines, Rules and Restrictions" voted on and adopted at the November 2021 Annual meeting into the Covenants.
- Sync the Covenants with the updated By-Laws voted on and approved at the November 2021 Annual meeting.

Although the Covenants Review Committee does not have a set timeline for completing our review, we hope to finish by early summer. If any Owner desires to provide input or suggested changes to our current Covenants, please send your input to the Board for review and consideration.

Once the Committee has completed its review, the next step will be to send out a "draft" copy of the updated Covenants, along with a summary highlighting the "proposed" changes. At that time, the Committee will seek comments on the proposed changes from all Owners. If requested, the Board will call a special meeting to provide for further discussion and answer all Owner questions regarding the proposed changes. We will also seek legal review with the Association Lawyers. The goal is to present the "proposed" updated Covenants to the Association Membership at our Annual Meeting in November for a vote to move forward and collect the 96 Owner signatures that are required to pass updated Covenants.



## **SOMMERVILLE YARD SALE**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 4**

**8 am until 1 pm**

Advertised in the Daily Press  
Seaford Trash & Treasure  
Yorktown Trash & Treasure  
Rain Date – June 11

# **SOMMERVILLE SPRING PICNIC**

**JUNE 4, 2022 -- 2:00 to 5:00pm**

**Ludlow/Sir John Lot**



**The Board of Directors will provide burgers, hot dogs, buns, condiments, chips, water, soda, and paper products. All you have to bring is a chair and your appetite!**

**Come meet our new neighbors and get reacquainted with those you've known for a while.**

**Rain Date – June 11**



**SOMMERVILLE E-MAIL ADDRESS**

**[Sommerville411@gmail.com](mailto:Sommerville411@gmail.com)**