

Hillcrest Forest Neighborhood Association

HillcrestForest.org

Spring 2015

ANNUAL MEETING & HOME TOUR

Mark your calendar to attend our association's annual meeting on Saturday, May 9th, at 1:00 p.m. It will be immediately followed by our 2014 Home & Garden Tour.

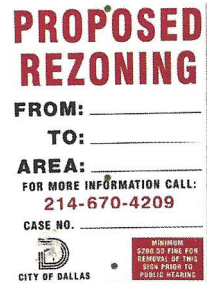
The meeting will be held in the Churchill Recreation Center at the intersection of Hillcrest Road and Churchill Way. After a brief meeting, we will adjourn for our 8th annual Home & Garden tour. This tour has been a big hit, as HFNA members get a chance to look inside some very interesting homes in our neighborhood. As always, this year's tour will be open only to our own members who are at the Annual Meeting.

The weather is usually beautiful in May, and everything is green and blooming. You won't want to miss it!

IMPORTANT NEIGHBORHOOD ZONING ISSUES

North Haven Gardens

The rear half of the property on Northaven Road was sold last year to a developer who will construct 31 single family homes on small lots. These will serve as a transition between the large-lot homes to the west and the institutional use of the Jewish Community Center on the east. Prices are expected to be in the \$600,000 range. Construction should start this summer. Several important protections for the neighbors were included in the new zoning, and the Board of the HFNA did not support or oppose this change.



Unity Church

A developer received zoning approval for small-lot single family homes on the vacant east half of the Unity Church property on Forest Lane. The HFNA conditionally supported the request, as it was in line with other small-lot developments nearby. As part of the agreement, the development will leave green space and trees near the street, in contrast to a brick wall at the sidewalk.

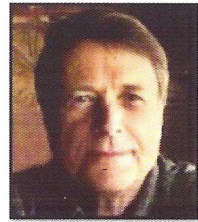
Alcuin School

Alcuin School has applied for full high school classes on its campus. Alcuin is a fine school, but this has been a controversial request. In response to significant opposition, including from the Hillcrest Forest Neighborhood Association, Alcuin offered its neighborhood \$100,000 a year for 10 years, to be used for security patrols. The outcome of the zoning case had not yet been decided as this newsletter went to press. See our web site, www.hillcrestforest.org for the current status.

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT BRUCE WILKE

Private Police Patrol

Most of you know that the area south of Forest Lane and east of Hillcrest Road has a private Police Patrol, called the 5 Star ENP (Expanded Neighborhood Patrol). Beverly Houston on Azalea Lane is the president. They are a separate organization from our HFNA, but they are located entirely within our boundaries, so we work closely together, and I sometimes communicate on their behalf. We even share a joint enrollment form for the convenience of our members.



We have been asked by residents outside of that area if it's possible to get a Police Patrol where they live. The answer is, theoretically "yes". The challenge is finding someone as hard-working as Beverly to manage it. Her 5 Star ENP group, covering 800 homes, is about as large as it can be and still be manageable.

A private Police Patrol will not eliminate crime, but in their first year, reported crime in the area dropped over 20%. We know of at least one instance in which the officers detained suspects at 2 a.m. which led to an arrest.

If you live outside that area and would be interested in managing such an organization, please let me know at b-wilke@swbell.net. It would mean a minimum 2-3 year commitment, and probably 2-3 hours of work a week, on average.

Everyone who lives in the Patrol area owes Beverly Houston a huge "Thank You" for what she has done for that part of our neighborhood.



WE HEARD YOU!

Every year, we have a blank line on our membership form where members can tell us of any neighborhood concerns that they have. The results? First, 60% of members didn't state any concern! This is very positive.

Of those who did, the leading concern was Crime & Security, which was mentioned by 27% of our members. We are considered a low-crime area, but that doesn't mean that it's not good to be aware.

Number 2 on the list – at 4% – was speeding on residential streets, and this was throughout our Association area.

Neighborhood appearance/beautification/cleanliness came in 3rd.

Altogether, 28 different concerns were mentioned. Some neighbors listed more than one. You can see the complete list on our web site.

The Hillcrest Forest Neighborhood Association has communicated these issues to our City Council representative, Lee Kleinman, for his information.

BRUSH & BULKY ITEM PICK-UP

Most people know that the City's pick-up week for brush & bulky items is the week of the 4th Monday of the month (which is not always the last Monday – sometimes there is a 5th Monday).

City regulations state that brush, leaves, or bulky items should be put out no earlier than the previous Thursday, and no later than 7 a.m. of the 4th Monday. Sometimes the trucks are in the neighborhood very early that day, and other times it's later in the week.

Of course, anything that fits in your large gray trash container – even scraps of lumber or oversized flower pots or a bag of leaves – can be put out in your regular trash container on any Tuesday. If it fits, it doesn't need to wait!

WATER RESTRICTIONS ARE BACK!

Don't forget that watering restrictions
are back in force as of April 1



If your house number is even, including ending in zero, your watering days are Sundays & Thursdays. If your house number is odd, your watering days are Saturdays & Wednesdays. Watering between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. is prohibited. Soaker hoses and hand watering by hose are allowed at any time, on any day.

One or two deep waterings a week are better for most of your landscaping, as it will encourage roots to go deeper to find water, down to depths where the sun doesn't evaporate the water quickly.

Most of Texas is in a severe drought. If current water restrictions are not sufficient as the summer goes on, we could conceivably be limited to watering once a week. Saving water now can help!

2014 - 2015 STEERING COMMITTEE

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WHEN YOUR PUPPY TAKES YOU FOR A WALK

Walking a dog (if you have one) is a sure-fire way to meet your neighbors.

When you do, don't forget that Dallas leash laws require that dogs be on a leash. Technically, this applies even if they are simply in the front yard with you, so they don't dash after someone jogging by (or worse, get hit by a car).

Also, owners must scoop up any droppings. Just about any plastic bag works, even a newspaper sleeve. Just put your hand inside, grab the dog doo-doo, and then turn the bag inside out. Please keep our neighborhood clean!

CRIME FIGHTING TIPS

Half of our local crime involves cars that are parked outside overnight.

They are prime targets. If you can clean out your garage and get your automobile inside where it's safe, your chance of having to make a police report will be cut by half! Get a home alarm system, if you don't already have one. They are wireless now and much cheaper than just a few years ago. If you already have an alarm, use it religiously! Even when you go to bed at night, set the perimeter alarm that will sound if an exterior door is opened (you can still move about the house).

Don't be shy about calling 911 and reporting something suspicious. The police can't be everywhere, and they say that we are their eyes and ears.

Crimes have been thwarted by alert neighbors who called the police.

BOBCAT & COYOTE ALERT!

Many neighbors have reported seeing bobcats and coyotes in the past year.



They are not uncommon in "woodland interface" areas like ours, where we have creeks and many trees. The consensus seems to be that they were here first and it's kind of cool that they're in our neighborhood.

Bobcats and coyotes avoid human contact. Their natural prey are rats, mice, squirrels, rabbits, and insects. As far as our pets, the risk to them is low – less than being lost or hit by a car. However, a couple of neighborhood dogs have gotten into fights with coyotes. And over the years, a few cats have met an untimely end from a coyote – mainly cats allowed to roam the neighborhood late at night when the coyotes are out.

According to the wildlife associations, trapping a bobcat or coyote will only result in another one moving into its area. And relocated bobcats seldom survive long. Bobcats and coyotes will usually leave when they encounter a human. You can also scare them away by yelling or throwing objects at them.

To deter them, the most important thing is to not leave pet food outside, where they may smell it and find it and start coming back for more.