

# Arbor Hills Newsletter

## February 2021

### Calendar of Events

February 23, 2021 Virtual Board Meeting – 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. In the absence of in-person, open meetings, co-owners are encouraged to submit questions/concerns to the Board via email at: [Board@arbor-hills.org](mailto:Board@arbor-hills.org).

Happy New Year Everyone!

### Greetings from your Board!

We hope this finds all of you safe and sound and looking forward to better times in 2021! Despite meeting restrictions imposed by COVID-19, your Board is here for you. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions about Arbor Hills Condominium Association (AHCA)-related matters, the Board respectfully requests that you email Alex Stankiewicz at: [alex@casabellamanagement.com](mailto:alex@casabellamanagement.com) and/or the Board at: [Board@arbor-hills.org](mailto:Board@arbor-hills.org). **If you have a safety concern, please contact Casa Bella and/or the Arbor Hills Board of Directors immediately. If you observe a fire or suspected criminal activity, immediately call police at 911.**

We recognize some (but not all) Arbor Hills co-owners exchange information informally on Facebook and Google Groups. This is a personal choice. Please be advised that Casa Bella and AHCA's Board of Directors will not respond to inquiries or issues raised on social media sites. Watch for official AHCA communications to come directly from Casa Bella or the Board. Additional official information can be found on the Arbor Hills website: [www.arbor-hills.org](http://www.arbor-hills.org) where you can read newsletters, meeting minutes and various announcements, and learn about our bylaws and neighborhood policies. An "Alteration/Modification Request" form is also available on this website. **Please take a look at this valuable information – especially if you are new to Arbor Hills!**

Our Board members volunteer many hours in service to our co-owners. We're not perfect, but we work hard to maintain and improve common elements in Arbor Hills and to help ensure our residents' safety. We are doing our level best to responsibly manage financial matters on behalf of our co-owners. Sometimes that means we have to make tough decisions for the benefit of "the all" over the interests of a few. We're excited about projects budgeted for 2021: replacing mailboxes and mailbox stands and our rotting front entrance sign; cleaning drain catch basins; replacing median trees and upgrading landscaping at our front entrance; relocating/upgrading some street signs; crack filling; and seal coating our streets (to be determined depending on condition of pavement). A cost-saving program to convert our streetlights' sodium vapor bulbs to LEDs, which began about 2 years ago, will continue in 2021. We hope you support our efforts!

Many thanks to Dennis Stom, who recently resigned from the Board, for his caring and inspiring leadership over the past few years. Those of us who remain on the Board are dedicated to meeting our residents' needs in a spirit of cooperation and good will. Together, we can make Arbor Hills one of Ann Arbor's premier communities!

### Arbor Hills is Looking Spiffy!

Our appreciation goes out to co-owners who worked so hard this past year to improve and beautify our neighborhood! Sidewalks and ramps have been leveled and repaired, and street trees have been trimmed – enhancing safety for those who use our sidewalks. Mold/algae has been washed off vinyl siding, house trim has been repainted, porches have been repaired, and yard debris has been cleared. **Improving the curb appeal of our homes helps maintain property values for all.**

Although significant progress has been made by the majority of our homeowners, there are some carryover items from last year and a few newly-identified items that still need attention. Casa Bella just mailed letters ***dated February 2021*** to co-owners who still need to address items of concern. The letters were accompanied by a copy of AHCA's "Contractors' Corner," which lists contractors to call for help with home projects.

**In recognition of COVID-imposed hardships, co-owners who received a February 2021 letter will have until June 1, 2021 to fully resolve items of concern.** Another inspection will take place in early June. Those who have not addressed items noted in Casa Bella's February 2021 letter, will receive a violation notice from Casa Bella. Unfortunately, further action, including fines, may be taken to ensure compliance with AHCA's bylaws. We don't want this to happen, so please contact contractors now and get work orders in place, so you can meet the June 1, 2021 deadline!

If you received a letter from Casa Bella dated February 2021 and need clarification or wish to appeal its contents, please contact Alex Stankiewicz at Casa Bella: [alex@casabellamanagement.com](mailto:alex@casabellamanagement.com). **If you did not receive a February 2021 letter from Casa Bella, your property was found to be in tip-top shape during our recent inspections. Thank you!**

## **Safety First -- Clearing Snow and Ice**

Homeowners (or renters) are responsible for clearing snow accumulation of one (1) inch or more on sidewalks within 24 hours of snowfall. Icy areas must be treated with sand or a salt-free substance designed to melt ice (e.g., “Safe Step” ice melting granules). To protect wetland and wildlife areas, it is not permissible to use salt on driveways or sidewalks (per Ann Arbor City Code, Chapter 49). **If you use a snow blower or contract with someone to clear your driveway and sidewalks, please make sure cleared snow stays in your yard – not thrown into unplowed or plowed streets.**

Please keep an eye on weather reports for anticipated snowfall and **remove your vehicles from our streets to accommodate Budd’s snow plows and salting crews.** Plowing may be delayed when the weather is really severe, so please be patient. We need your help! Budd’s is not always aware of slippery, icy conditions. If you have concerns about street plowing or identify icy areas in our roadways, please notify Alex at Casa Bella and he will get in touch with Budd’s.

## **Please Slow Down – What’s the Rush?**

The posted speed limit in Arbor Hills is 15 miles per hour (mph) – but that doesn’t mean you have to drive that fast! We have little children who ride scooters and bikes, and plenty of grown-ups who frequently walk in our streets – especially during snowy/icy winter months. And, sometimes our pets might sneak out of the house and stray into our roadways. We don’t want any of our residents or pets to get hurt. Also, please come to a full stop at our intersections before proceeding to turn. Take special care to slow way down to watch for cyclists and runners as you pull out of Arbor Hills or you may run into them!

The Board is looking into various speed mitigation measures to encourage drivers to slow down; however, YOU are our best defense! Please SLOW DOWN and advise young drivers in your household to SLOW DOWN! The City will not come to our rescue because Arbor Hills has private roads. If you observe a commercial vehicle violating our 15 mph speed limit or driving recklessly, please jot down identifying information and notify Casa Bella. Let’s keep everyone safe!

## **Patching those Pesky Potholes**

Many thanks to Ig Justyna who diligently patches small potholes on our roadways at a fraction of the cost of what AHCA would normally pay a contractor to do this work. If you spot a small pothole on one of our roadways, please email the Board with its location, so we can put it on the list for patching when weather permits. The sooner we can plug these holes, the better!

## **What’s the Right Height for Trees Hanging over Sidewalks and Streets?**

We don’t want anyone to get hurt while using our sidewalks. Arbor Hills follows the City of Ann Arbor ordinance regarding acceptable street tree height. It is your responsibility to **ensure trees located near your sidewalk are trimmed to allow for at least a 6-foot clearance above the sidewalk.** It also has been brought to our attention that drivers of snow plows, large delivery trucks and garbage trucks are having trouble avoiding tree limbs that are hanging too low or too far over our roadways. **Please trim your street trees to at least an 8-foot clearance above the street at about a 6-foot distance from the curb.** This will help reduce the chance of damage to your trees and provide access for Budd’s to access all areas of our roads and clear snow to the curb. Thank you!

## **Winter Tree Care**

**Certified arborists have advised us that, due to risk of disease, there are only certain times of the year when it is prudent to cut down or trim certain trees (for example, red oaks should only be trimmed during cold weather months).** We don’t want to risk “infecting” and/or killing healthy trees. The attached “Contractors’ Corner” can help you locate a reputable tree care contractor for advice and service.

## **Before You Plant New Trees or Start Home Repair/Improvement Projects**

Co-owners must complete and submit a **“Request for Alteration/Modification” approval form in advance if you wish to make a change** from established color standards for trim, roof shingles, front doors, siding; garage door or window pane design. You must also complete and submit a “Request for Alteration/Modification” approval form before you **change or construct/install a new structural component** such as a retaining wall, deck or fence. This form is available on the Arbor Hills website and from Casa Bella Property Management. Failure to submit an Alt/Mod Request form and obtain approval for your project prior to starting it could result in you having to remove the unapproved item. For more information, please refer to the AHCA bylaws and policies.

It is also the **responsibility of homeowners to ensure appropriate building permits are obtained** (either by themselves or hired contractors), prior to initiating electrical, mechanical, heating and cooling, plumbing, and/or renovation or construction projects. This also applies to, but is not limited to: roofing, window replacement, deck replacement/construction, fence construction, basement refinishing, and other home improvement or large landscaping projects. For your own protection, verify contractors are properly licensed and insured to do the work.

**And, don’t forget you are legally required to contact “MISS DIG” to identify/flag underground utilities before you or your contractors begin any excavation, landscaping or tree planting project.**

## **Results of our “Reserve Study”**

Traditionally, every five (5) years, AHCA retains a consultant to conduct a “Reserve Study” to help us determine whether Arbor Hills is on track to fund future maintenance and improvement projects for common elements in Arbor Hills. Good news! Based on the results of the 2020 “Reserve Study,” which was completed in late 2020, **we do not anticipate the need to increase homeowners’ association dues at this time.** January 2021 dues remained at \$365. Barring unforeseen emergency expenses, our July 2021 dues are also set to remain at \$365.

## **Green Road Pump House**

As communicated by Casa Bella Management Company on February 17, 2021, the Arbor Hills Condominium Association (AHCA) Board of Directors recently learned that a few Arbor Hills residents have expressed interest in preserving the pump house located in Arbor Hills Park, 3100 Green Road. The pump house does not belong to the Arbor Hills Condominium Association. The City has clear title to the property and annexed the pump house, its small lot and curb cut into the City park system many years ago (as a portion of Arbor Hills Park). The City, as a rule, does not privatize a property once it becomes park land.

Even if this were possible, it is cost prohibitive for AHCA to assume ownership of the pump house; convert the building into something that is habitable; pay for increased liability insurance; pay for increased property taxes; and cover the costs of maintenance. Last week, AHCA’s Board notified interested AHCA co-owners and confirmed with Ann Arbor city officials that AHCA has no intention of interfering with the City’s plans for the pump house located at 3100 Green Road.

## **January 2021 Co-Owner Fees are now “Past Due”**

Association fees are due from each Arbor Hills household every six (6) months -- by January 1 and July 1. Payment invoices/coupons (in the amount of \$365) were mailed by Casa Bella for fees due by January 1, 2021. Co-owners who did not pay their homeowners’ association fees within a 30-day grace period following January 1, 2021 will incur an additional \$25 *per month* late/penalty fee until all outstanding fees are paid in full. These late fees can add up quickly! Unfortunately, if an attorney is engaged by Casa Bella to handle collections, attorney fees are charged back to co-owners. In extreme cases, wages may be garnished or liens placed on homes in order to collect overdue fees. Timely collection of co-owners’ fees allows AHCA to cover operating expenses. **If you have not already paid your January 2021 fees, please contact Alex at Casa Bella immediately.**

## **Please Register On-Line with Casa Bella**

**Each of our adult residents needs to establish an Arbor Hills Account through Casa Bella Property Management** to ensure receipt of official email communications about our community. To set up your account, go to: [www.casabellamanagement.com](http://www.casabellamanagement.com); click on CREATE ACCOUNT; complete your information; including the unit number for your property (Lot #); click CONTINUE. Within 1-2 business days, your account will be established with Casa Bella! **You can pay your association fees online once you establish an account with Casa Bella. You may also mail your association fees to Casa Bella at the address listed at the bottom of this newsletter.**

## **Contacts**

### **Property Management Company:**

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**Board:** [board@arbor-hills.org](mailto:board@arbor-hills.org)

**Arbor Hills Website:** [www.arbor-hills.org](http://www.arbor-hills.org)

Carla Charlebois  
Thomas Edwards  
Sherri Fountain  
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**We welcome your suggestions for improving our neighborhood! Let us hear from you!**