



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

September 2023 Edition



HICKORYFARMS.ORG

P.O. BOX 2239, FAIRFAX VA 22031

HFCA BOARD & VOLUNTEERS

- President: **VACANT**
- Vice President: Telah Jackson
- Secretary: Ben Noviello
- Treasurer: Judy Deng
- Assistant Treasurer: Tad Weed
- Common Areas: Melissa Stark
- Webmaster: Bryan Crabtree
- Neighborhood Watch Coordinators: Allie Shaw and Steve Kubrak
- At Large: Pam Barrett and Charles Chu
- Architectural Reviews: Donna Garfield, Justin Mensen, and Bob Sottile
- Common Areas Committee: Bob and Judy Cosgriff, Rich Dudley, Larry Rogers, Melissa and Jarrett Stark
- Neighborhood Block Reps: Jim Bever, Alyssa Eswood, Ellen Head, Justin Mensen, Meredith Perkins, Lee Sottile, Jen Spencer
- Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Maloney
- Social Committee: **VACANT**

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HOW TO CONTACT ...

- Board of Directors: hfca@hickoryfarms.org
- President: **VACANT**
- Architectural Control Committee: acc@hickoryfarms.org
- Treasurer: treasurer@hickoryfarms.org
- Common Areas: commonareas@hickoryfarms.org
- Webmaster: webmaster@hickoryfarms.org
- Newsletter: newsletter@hickoryfarms.org



HFCA BUDGET AND ANNUAL ASSESSMENT NOTICE

By Judy Deng

Under the Hickory Farms Bylaws and the Virginia Property Owners Association Act (VPOAA), the Board of Directors must approve a budget and set an annual assessment for the forthcoming year. The Hickory Farms Board of Directors reviewed the 2024 budget and concluded a \$290 annual assessment was needed. This increase from \$281 to \$290 is needed to cover the rising costs of operations and contribute to the reserve fund (used for repairs and upgrades of HFCA assets).

The 2024 budget and the increase of the 2024 annual assessment to \$290 were approved by the HFCA Board of Directors at the monthly meeting on August 15, 2023. Also approved was the 2024 budget.

For Homeowners, below is the Board–approved 2024 Budget. By September 18th, homeowners will be sent a proxy and invitation to attend the Annual Meeting via Zoom on October 17th at 7pm, and affirm the budget.

INCOME	
Assessments	\$57,420
Assessments - Late Fees	
Interest	
Advertising	\$550
Legal Fees Recovered	
VPOAA Disclosure Fees	\$875
TOTAL INCOME	\$58,845
EXPENSES	
Common Area Maintenance	\$27,825
Common Area Improvement	\$3,322
Common Area Remediation	\$6,090
Insurance - Director's Liability & Surety	\$2,879
Insurance - Commercial Crime Insurance	\$921
Insurance - General Liability	\$355
Legal Fees	\$2,372
Postage	\$277
Neighborhood Watch	\$204
Printing	\$750
Social Activities	\$2,000
Tax Preparation	\$385
Taxes & Government Charges/Fees	\$285
Capital Reserve Deposits	\$7,231
Administrative Fees	\$1,750
Strategic Projects	\$2,000
Bank Charges	\$200
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$58,845
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	\$0

Notes: Reserve fund \$64,722 as of 07/31/2023 (Money Market and CD Account).

HICKORY FARMS NEEDS A PRESIDENT

By Ben Noviello

In order to maintain our common areas, support community-wide activities that enrich our lives, keep our development safe, and be responsive to the concerns of homeowners, the Hickory Farms Home Owners Association relies on an all-volunteer board. We currently have an opportunity for a motivated homeowner to make a major contribution to the community by volunteering to be the president. Please keep in mind that you would be assisted and supported by an experienced group of motivated people. Ideally, we are looking for someone with free time, communication skills, and enthusiasm. The official duties are located on our [website](#). If you are interested in volunteering, and by doing so help keep the Hickory Farms development a wonderful place to live, please contact the board by emailing hfca@hickoryfarms.org



THERE'S STILL TIME TO JOIN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH ... **AND DOG WALKERS ARE WELCOME!**

Did you know it only takes up to 90 minutes every couple of months to join our Neighborhood Watch? Our active team has been going strong since the summer. Please consider joining and increasing the safety in our beautiful neighborhood.

Dog Walkers: Did you know that you and your pup can join our Neighborhood Watch as a team?

If you're interested in joining, please contact the Hickory Farms Neighborhood Watch Coordinator at <https://hickoryfarms.org/contact>.

ANNUAL MEETING SAVE THE DATE!

Hickory Farms Community Association Annual Meeting will be held on October 17th, 2023, at 7 PM via Microsoft Teams. A proxy and meeting information will be sent out in the mail the first week of September.

September's HFCA Board of Director Meeting was scheduled to be held on Tuesday, September 5th at 7 PM via Microsoft Teams.

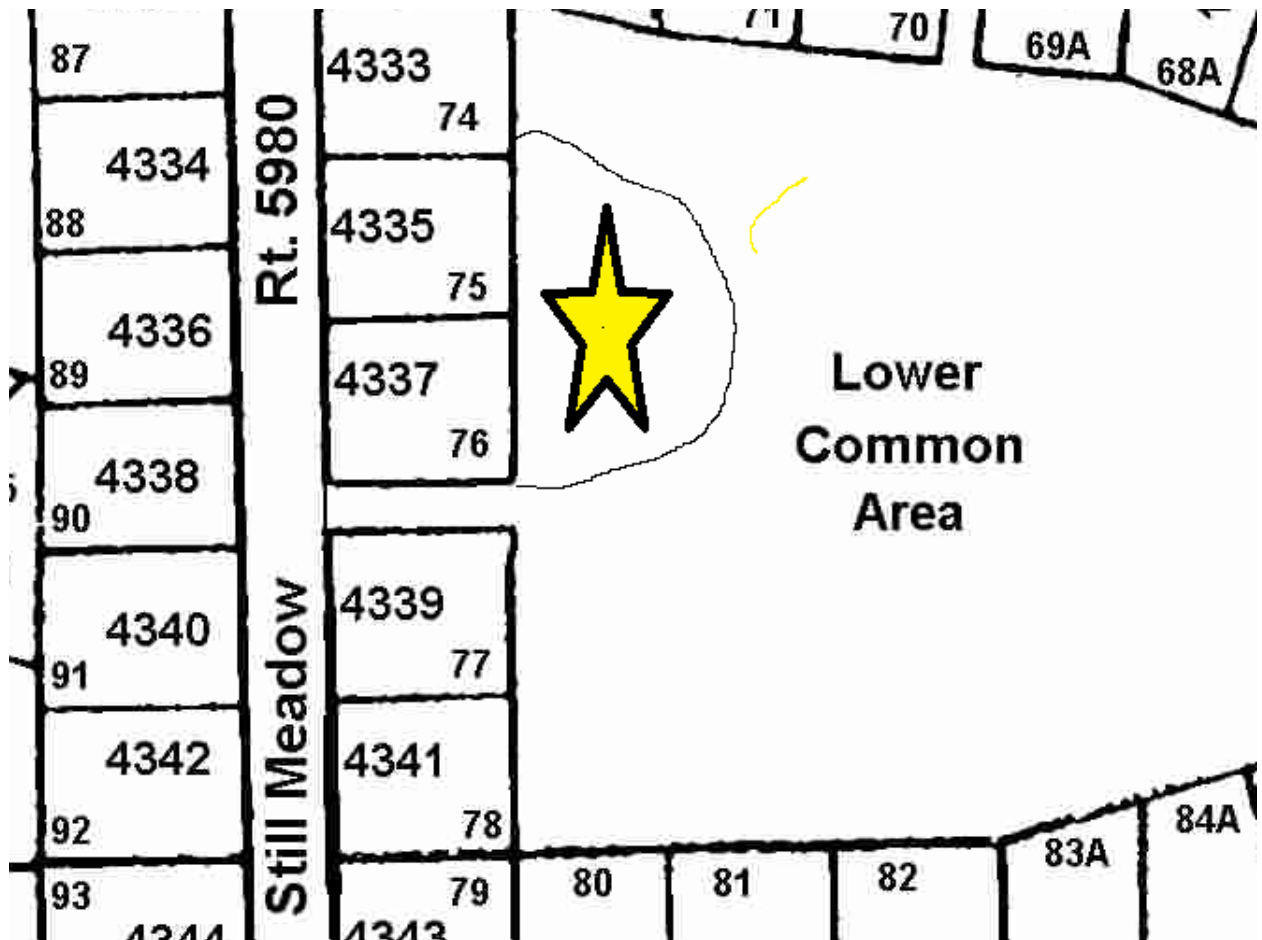
COMMONS AREA COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS TAKING STEPS TO ERADICATE TREE OF HEAVEN IN THE LOWER COMMONS

By Melissa Stark

Five years ago, a small grove of Tree of Heaven was identified in the Lower Commons behind the homes of 4333 – 4337 Still Meadow Rd. Within that 5-year timeframe more Tree of Heaven has established itself within the island and spread to other islands within the Lower and Upper Commons. This tree is very aggressive and a high seed producer; therefore, it overtakes areas quickly and displaces native understory and trees.

The Commons Area Committee has met with interested homeowners bordering the areas, as well as current and previous Board of Directors and CAC members about eradicating Tree of Heaven and reestablishing our native forest areas.

We would like to extend an invitation to all homeowners who would like to learn more about what steps the Commons Area Committee and Board of Directors will be taking to start the eradication of Tree of Heaven. This informal in person informational event will be held at the area marked by the yellow star on Saturday, September 9th from 10 to 11 AM. Please stop by anytime within that timeframe.



Invasive Species Spotted in Northern VA



The Tree-of-Heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*, is a non-native species imported from China in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The tree matures rapidly, spreads aggressively, and is particularly damaging to our ecosystem because it poisons the soil around its roots, thereby preventing native trees and plants from growing nearby.

In addition, this tree is a preferred food source for the invasive Spotted Lanternfly! What can you do? If you find the tree on your property, please take steps to remove it. It will only grow back if you simply cut it down, so be sure to kill it by destroying the root system with poison. Learn more about the safe and effective removal of this invasive on [Plant NOVA Trees' website](#).



Spotted lanternfly identification information with links to the quarantine area can be found on the [County's website](#). Keep an eye out for spotted lanternfly in Fairfax and [report sightings](#) with photos and address to ReportSLF@fairfaxcounty.gov or to (703) 324-5304. The popular mobile app, [iNaturalist](#), is an effective and efficient method for reporting a SLF sighting.

Originally published in The Walkinshaw Advisory the week of July 27th, 2023.

HFCA BOARD MEETING NOTICE

HFCA Board Meetings continue to be held via Zoom. Unless otherwise notified or due to an unforeseen change, HFCA Board Meetings will be held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.

To join a Board meeting, contact any HFCA Board Member or send a request to join to hfca@hickoryfarms.org. You will be provided with the Zoom meeting URL, meeting number and passcode.

RABBIT RUN STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT

By Bob Cosgriff

The long-awaited start of planning for the restoration of Rabbit Run has begun. Over the last several years, runoff from surrounding properties has severely eroded the streambed of Rabbit Run to the point where the board had to remove footbridges and close the trail. Beginning in 2019, the HFCA board began to work with various agencies, including the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), to gather information on how best to address this issue. Working with the Watershed Projects Implementation Branch of the DPWES Stormwater Planning Division under Branch Head Charles Smith, Hickory Farms was successful in having funding for planning and design included in the FY 2024 County budget. This funding became available on 1 July of this year.

On 28 August, members of Hickory Farms met here with County representatives in a pre-design meeting to discuss the project. The goal was to begin to develop the scope of the work for the project. Representing Hickory Farms were Melissa Stark (HFCA Board member and Common Areas Coordinator), Jim Bever (past HFCA board president), Judy Cosgriff (CAC member) and myself (CAC member and Rabbit Run Project Committee Coordinator). Representing the County were Charles Smith, Aaron George (Mr. Smith's replacement), Kenneth Trinh (Project Manager), Susan Foster (DPWES Landscape Architect), and Clark Carson (Consultant, McCormick Taylor). Due to short notice and work commitments, other members of the Rabbit Branch Remediation Project Committee were unable to attend this kick-off meeting

For three hours, the group walked along Rabbit Run gathering data and discussing various approaches to remediating the erosion problem and restoring Rabbit Run to a more natural state in terms of its ability to handle runoff without creating further erosion. The next stages in the process are as follows:

1. Issue the design contract (probably 1-2 months)
2. Begin design (consulting firm, McCormick Taylor)
3. Survey the property (by end of the year)
4. Obtain easements and complete the design concept (TBD, 2024)
5. Review and approve design (TBD)
6. Obtain construction funding (TBD, could be for FY25 or later, contingent on completion of approved design)
7. Issue construction contract (TBD)
8. Commence construction work (TBD)

Mr. Smith stressed that Hickory Farms will be fully involved every step of the way in the design development and review process working directly with Mr. Trinh, the Project Manager. One of the goals of stream restoration is to reduce, to the extent possible, the removal of existing tree cover and other vegetation. However, it is important to know at the outset that some trees will come down, certainly those that are already being undermined by the continuing erosion. Additionally, some other trees might need to be removed in order to provide access for construction equipment and storage of supplies. There are several areas along Rabbit Run that are very healthy forested environments, and the goal is to leave these undisturbed. Susan

Foster, the landscape architect, will be involved in identifying various areas of the RPA to inform tree-removal decisions. Also, the County is required to restore tree canopy, so new trees and other vegetation as warranted will be replanted at the end of construction.

There are a variety of techniques to restore eroded streams, including raising the streambed, regrading the banks to widen the floodplain, armoring the stream banks with large stones, and creating meanders. The best approach(es) will be determined by the design.

In conclusion, an important first step has been taken with this meeting. The entire Rabbit Run restoration process will take a few years to complete. We need to be patient. As soon as we receive more information, most likely by the end of the year or early in 2024, we will update everyone.



Fairfax County officials meeting with Hickory Farms representatives to discuss the Rabbit Run restoration project. (Photo by Jim Bever)

LOOKING AT SELLING YOUR HOME SOON?

Please visit our <https://hickoryfarms.org/selling-your-home> to get started on your disclosure packet to ensure it is delivered in a timely manner prior to closing. Please note that it can take up to **4 weeks** and it is highly recommended that you start the process prior to the date your home gets listed.

THE BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS

By Bob Cosgriff

This year we had four late-season bluebird nests. Two of them produced non-viable eggs. This could have been due to high temperatures or some other cause. In two of the boxes, two eggs were also removed, whether by the bluebirds or by marauding house sparrows is unknown. On our last check on 27 August, these non-viable eggs were still in the abandoned boxes, so we cleared the box in preparation for the winter. The other two boxes did better. One produced four fledglings, bringing our year-to-date total to 27 new bluebirds. The other box still had rather large hatchlings in it, with an estimated fledging date around 1 September. This is about the latest fledging date we've noted in 13 years. Assuming this box is successful, our 2023 total would be 31, setting a Hickory Farms record.

With the end of the breeding season, our data will be submitted to the Virginia Bluebird Society (VBS) where it will be added to reports from around the state. When I receive the final VBS report in a couple of months, I'll provide a rundown on Fairfax County and the rest of the state in terms of bluebirds, tree swallows, house wrens, and any other species noted in bluebird boxes. The focus now turns to the fall migration. Many songbirds, such as warblers and thrushes, have already begun moving and perhaps have already passed through our area. Hummingbirds are getting ready to leave us by mid-September and are filling up at nectar-bearing flowers and hummingbird feeders. Over on the coast, the shorebird migration is beginning and will run through September and perhaps into October as sandpipers, plovers, and skimmers head to warmer climes. Terns and some seagulls are also on the move. Ducks, geese, and swans will be coming south also up to November. If you are heading for the beaches of New Jersey (such as Cape May), Delaware, Maryland, or Virginia to enjoy a fall getaway, be sure to keep your eyes open for birds on the beach. It's very entertaining and a good way to get in touch with the pulse of nature.

Starting in September and going on into the fall, raptors are on the move. The peak date here for Broad-winged Hawks is 17 September. They have been spotted several times in the past circling on thermals above Hickory Farms in large groups called "kettles." By November, 'snowbirds' such as Slate-colored Juncos, will show up. White-throated Sparrows will join them here for the winter. The colder months are good times to put out feeders to attract a variety of birds that winter over here, including nuthatches, woodpeckers, blue jays, mourning doves, goldfinches, and cardinals, to name the most common species.

In closing, please take time to walk through our beautiful common areas. The wildflower meadows are in bloom and providing valuable food for seed-eating birds, such as the American Goldfinch. Also, Joe-Pye Weed, milkweed, asters, and other blooming plants are attracting large numbers of beautiful butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. While you're out and about, keep your eyes open to enjoy the many birds of Hickory Farms.

JOIN OUR LISTSERV!

Don't miss any news! Join the Hickory Farms Listserv! Hickory Farms utilizes Google Groups to manage our listserv. This platform is simple, easy to use and free. If you don't have a Gmail account, you can sign up for one at <http://www.gmail.com>.

Once you have an account, visit <https://groups.google.com/my-groups> to sign into Google Groups. From there, go straight to <http://groups.google.com/g/hickory-farms-hoa/> and click the "Ask to Join." In the Reason for Joining, please include your address, phone number, and own/rent status to include in the neighborhood directory.

Once your membership is approved, you'll receive emails when they are sent to the listserv. You can adjust your membership settings - like changing single emails to a weekly digest - in your Google Groups Settings.

Please don't forget to review the guidelines on the Hickory Farms website here: <https://hickoryfarms.org/hickory-farms-listserv> . There's also information on how to post to the listserv, manage your account and more.

Finally, if you need basic Google Groups help, visit: <https://support.google.com/groups/answer/1067205?hl=en> . You can always contact the admins of the listserv for help or questions by emailing hickory-farms-hoa+managers@googlegroups.com.

STUDENT YELLOW PAGES



Shannon Turner	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Babysitting, pet sitting
Nathan Turner	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Dog walking, yard work, leaf removal
Lily Bucher	Lrbucher4@gmail.com	Babysitting/mother's helper, pet sitting
Kiera Stark	commonareas@hickoryfarms.org	Pet sitting
Greysen Berg	210-428-5535	Yard work, leaf raking
Cedar Batz	571-398-1467	Dog walking, dog sitting

If you offer services such as those listed above, or others such as tutoring, etc., and wish to be included in future listings, please email the Newsletter Editor at newsletter@hickoryfarms.org.

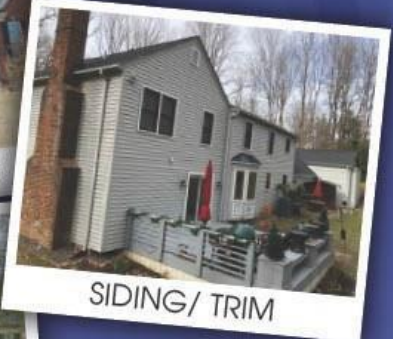
NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE AND DISTRIBUTION NOTICE

Newsletter items are due the 25th of the month, for the next month's issue. Please send submissions to newsletter@hickoryfarms.org.

Newsletters are distributed via the HFCA listserv and posted on the HFCA website. Paper versions of the newsletters are no longer delivered to households. All are encouraged to access the digital newsletter via the listserv or the HFCA website.



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