

# READWOOD

DuFief Homes Association Newsletter Summer 2023

**Tree Tops - President's Message** by Fred Mingo, HOA Board President

August 2023

Dear Community,

The summer is flying by and it's hard to believe September and the school year is here! I hope everyone has had a good summer and is ready for fall, and hopefully lower temperatures. First off, I want to share a few updates on our ongoing projects and add that you can hear monthly reports at our Board meetings, held the second Monday evening of the month. Please feel free to join our monthly Zoom HOA Board meetings; meeting details are available through your AppFolio portal or at our <https://dufief.org/> website.

## 1. The community survey:

a. If you have not responded yet then please do, there are only 20 questions. Your input will help shape your community. So far we have received 120 completed surveys and will release the collective results after the survey close date of August 31st.

## 2. AppFolio portal system:

a. We're up to 79% of our homeowners using our new system which greatly improves communications, scheduling, ARC submissions and much more. Don't be left out; please log in and activate your individual homeowner portal. Please email [board@dufief.org](mailto:board@dufief.org) if you have any questions and or need assistance with our new system.

b. Please note: all Architecture Review Committee (ARC) submissions are now processed thru AppFolio.

Great news! At our August Board meeting Brian Frank, our Treasurer, noted that the DuFief community continues to experience strong homeowner price appreciation. Rising home values benefit everyone and signal that DuFief is a community where people want to live. We all want to keep our values rising so I want to personally encourage everyone to help by maintaining an attractive curb side appeal of your property. One way many can help is by properly storing your trash and recycling containers. In fact, DuFief HOA Article VI: Protective Covenants and Instructions #6 on page VIII of our directory states: "Trash and garbage containers shall not be permitted to remain in public view except on days of trash collection. No accumulation or storage of litter, new or used building materials, or trash of any other kind shall be permitted on any lot."

Finally, please mark your calendars for Saturday October 7th and join in our second community wide picnic at our pond for 2023. We had over 200 residents attend our June picnic and I hope you and your family can join us again for complimentary food, drinks, games, and a chance to meet your neighbors and volunteers serving on your Board, and community committees. Also, for those considering outdoor home improvements, we will have the ARC color palette on display. Additional picnic details will be available on your AppFolio community schedule and our <https://dufief.org/website>.

## The DuFief Spring Picnic was a huge success!

The Spring Picnic attracted over 200 neighbors! We hope you were able to attend and socialize with old and new neighbors. Many thanks to Pam Weld, Beth Shakespeare, and all the Board members for organizing the fabulous event.



Please mark your calendar for Saturday , October 7th to come out, meet your neighbors and HOA Board members at our fall community picnic. All DuFief community residents are invited. Rain Date will be the following Saturday, October 14th.

Additional details and exact time to follow.

We are looking for volunteers to assist! If you are able to assist and or have any questions or recommendations please email [board@dufief.org](mailto:board@dufief.org)

# News from our Board Members

## Secretary's Report by Ron Ely

2023 has been an exciting year for the board as we have endeavored to make a number of changes to help serve the community better. For all of its fifty year history this has proudly been a volunteer run organization. While I believe this has many benefits, including keeping the organization closer to the members of the community and allowing us to keep costs and dues low relative to other HOAs, at times the somewhat informal nature of our organization has created challenges which the board has sought ways to remedy.

When I joined the board in 2022, the HOA had fifty years worth of legacy paper records stored in boxes in a board member's garage. The board and ARC have at times had difficulty locating records due to the inconsistent record keeping over such a long period of time, which was a particular concern with respect to the ARC records for members' homes. The board took steps to implement a more formal records management process by having thousands of ARC records and other historic documents scanned into searchable PDFs.

In December 2022, the board obtained a new administrative software service called **Appfolio**, which allows us to perform a number of important processes more effectively. This system has become our primary portal for:

- Handling invoices and payments for dues
- Submitting ARC requests and recording ARC approvals
- Sending notifications to the community about events and news
- Sharing information and documents with the community
- Recording other administrative activities and communications

So far we believe this system has been providing benefits to the organization. About 80% of homeowners are currently using the system. As of August, we managed to collect 95% of the dues owed for 2023, mostly paid through the portal. The system is also allowing the ARC to have better records of decisions and communications with homeowners regarding ARC approvals moving forward.

As of mid 2023, we are in the process of organizing these legacy records into our new electronic system. We hope that one benefit from this will be to make it easier for homeowners to get access to legacy records for their own homes. Under our bylaws homeowners have a right to examine HOA records, and any homeowner who desires to see their home's records can reach out to the board or ARC via email.

Homeowners can access the Appfolio system at <https://dufief.appfolio.com/connect/>. We currently are requesting that homeowners use the **Appfolio** system to submit ARC requests via the "Architectural Reviews" tab. You will be able to use the "Payments" tab to pay annual dues and see the receipts of your past payments. A calendar of community events is also accessible through the Appfolio system.

Any residents who still need to obtain a login to the Appfolio portal or who have questions about the system can contact [board@dufief.org](mailto:board@dufief.org). We think that these and other changes we are making will position the HOA to serve the community more effectively in the future. Thank you.

## Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments by Brian Frank

As of August 14, 2023, the Board has collected annual dues from 293 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 95.8%). The annual assessments that we use to maintain our common areas in order to keep the DuFief neighborhood a popular area for homebuyers ARE NOT OPTIONAL.

Every household must pay the annual dues. The original notice for 2023 dues was sent to all homeowners at the beginning of January 2023. Additional copies of the invoices have been mailed and emailed to homeowners.

The annual assessments are used primarily to maintain our common areas in order to keep the DuFief neighborhood a popular area for homebuyers. Every household must pay the annual dues. Any homes that have not paid their dues are subject to potential lawsuit which will include a request for interest and attorneys fees and may result in a lien on your property. Overall, we have been very successful in collecting dues. All assessments have been collected for 2010 and all years prior. There is one home that has not paid dues from 2011 through 2019; two (2) homes that have not paid 2020 dues; five (5) homes that have not paid 2021; seven (7) homes that have not paid 2022 dues and thirteen (13) homes that have not paid 2023 dues.

The Board does not enjoy having to take neighbors to court, however, the homeowners assessments are no different than having to pay real estate taxes on your property. If you owe more than two years of dues, a lawsuit is likely to be filed. For those who have paid your annual assessments in a timely manner, "THANK YOU"! For those who have not paid the 2023 or owe for prior years, please do so as soon as possible in order to avoid additional HOA costs, and a potential lawsuit.

Should you have any questions, please contact me via email – [treasurer@dufief.org](mailto:treasurer@dufief.org) or by telephone – 240-606-5100.

### Architectural Review Committee (ARC) updates by Herman Basra

The ARC received 13 applications since June 1st. Of these 12 have been approved. One was sent via mail and is still processing. In addition, we have been working on simplifying the rules code and getting it loaded into the new AppFolio system to further streamline processing. The longest an application was in pending state this month was 11 days, so our process is getting faster and smoother. Most ARC requests were processed within 1-4 days.

For the DuFief Community's architectural guidelines for renovations, repairs and additions in accordance with maintaining the California Contemporary design Miller and Smith created in 1973.

Please go to [www.dufief.org/architectural-review](http://www.dufief.org/architectural-review) for an application before doing work on the exterior of your home.

## Noteworthy News



# A Memory Preserved

by Donna Freshwater and Martha Jaffe

Back in the early 2000s, the residents of Seneca Castle Court wanted to honor the memory of a nice neighbor, and original Dufief owner named Don van Prooien. Don was an engineer who loved to solve problems, go out on his boat, go fishing, bicycling, and generally just be a friendly neighbor. We pooled our money and bought the bench and installed a plaque with his name. There was even an unveiling ceremony to present it to Don's widow, Shirley. Over the years, the bench has been a place to sit during our annual autumn Block party. The passing years and the lichen had not been particularly kind to the bench. It was on our "to do" list to refinish it, but like many things on my to do list, it had not been accomplished. Imagine my surprise when I realized the board had "kidnapped" the bench and returned it in beautiful condition. (Martha Jaffe)

Our HOA President, Fred Mingo, surveyed the neighborhood looking for areas that could be improved - to create a pleasant and welcoming scene for residents and visitors alike. Among the possibilities presented, the bench spoke to me. A memorial bench, placed to honor a clearly well-loved individual. Time and Mother Nature had rendered it unusable. Surely it could be restored to a semblance of its original intent and appearance. Maybe there were original residents who remembered and loved him? I wanted to have a go at it, try and cut away the crust, see what was under Mother Nature's handiwork.

To that end, Jack Weld and Jared Smith brought the bench to my backyard to be pressure washed. It might seem odd, but I enjoy doing this sort of work (on a small scale, of course). Out came the pressure washer, and work began. Patience, time, and water pressure began to knock the crust and dirt off, revealing a lovely memorial bench. It was a gratifying experience, especially seeing the engraved dedication plaque reminding me why it felt important to attempt this project.

The bench moved on to Jared Smith's, where he did a beautiful job sanding and staining. I hope the neighbors were pleasantly surprised when it reappeared. I like to imagine them sitting there in the shade, enjoying each other's company.(Donna Freshwater)

\* On behalf of all the residents of Seneca Castle Court, thank you very much to Fred (who was looking to beautify our courts) and Donna and Jared for your kind act and hard work. Don's bench now sits proudly in its original spot, befitting its honoree. (Martha Jaffe)

## **311 Update: The MC311 Customer Service Center**

[\(https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mc311/\)](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mc311/) is Montgomery County's source for non-emergency government information and services. Your HOA Board has used this service often to request upgrades to our county supported infrastructure. Recently we submitted improvements to seven of our cul-de-sac's and the county promptly repaired the curbs in the worst condition as highlighted in the following photos. They also removed a street sign that was discarded on the Alcinda Dr. cul-de-sac. We have requested planting trees and additional repairs, however, these requests are still processing with no guarantee, but we're trying.

As residents of Montgomery County, you can also submit requests directly if you notice something in disrepair. Together we can all work to further beautify our DuFief neighborhood.



Before



After

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors



This is your space to offer or ask for services from Dufief neighbors. Do you babysit, petsit, enjoy yard work and can offer help, troubleshoot technology issues, or need recommendations or assistance? If you would like to list a service or a request in our next Readwood, please send an email to [Readwoodeditor@gmail.com](mailto:Readwoodeditor@gmail.com).

**Committee forming!** Are you interested in helping neighbors who might need some assistance? Some of our neighbors may be isolated in their homes for a variety of reasons. Health issues, disabilities and language barriers keep people from reaching out. Often a friendly neighbor checking in to see if they need anything is appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering or have ideas on how we can identify these neighbors while respecting their privacy, please reach out by emailing [readwoodeditor@gmail.com](mailto:readwoodeditor@gmail.com) or [Board@dufief.org](mailto:Board@dufief.org).

CASUAL TUTORING available for grades 1-7. Do you find yourself stretched too thin at times and can't help your child with their schoolwork or don't understand the curriculum? I am a veteran MCPS teacher, an experienced tutor, and an ADHD coach who can assist with your short term needs. I work on an as needed basis with flexible scheduling so no long term commitment is necessary. Please contact me at [yrtutor1@gmail.com](mailto:yrtutor1@gmail.com) for more information. Sandi Shapiro

## Reports of Coyotes in MOCO! What to do?

Guidelines offered by The Humane Society of the United States

### Coyote hazing: How to keep coyotes away

Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals who avoid human contact. Coyotes who have adapted to urban and suburban environments, however, may realize there are few real threats and may approach people or feel safe visiting yards even when people are present. These coyotes have become habituated (lost their fear of humans), probably owing to the bounty of food that they have become accustomed to feeding upon in your neighborhood. These bold coyotes should not be tolerated or enticed but instead given the clear message that they should not be so brazen.

#### Hazing

Hazing is a method that makes use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from backyards and play spaces.

## Methods of hazing

Using a variety of different hazing tools [PDF] is critical so that coyotes don't get used to redundant or single stimulus devices, sounds, and actions.

- Yelling and waving your arms while approaching the coyote
- Noisemakers: Voice, whistles, air horns, bells, "shaker" cans full of marbles or pennies, pots, lid or pie pans banged together
- Projectiles: sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls or rubber balls
- Other: hoses, water guns with vinegar water, spray bottles with vinegar water, pepper spray or bear repellent

## "Go away, coyote!"

The simplest method of hazing a coyote involves being loud and large:

Stand tall, wave your arms, and yell at the coyote, approaching them if necessary, until they run away as demonstrated in this coyote hazing video.

If a coyote has not been hazed before, they may not immediately run away when you yell at them. If this happens, you may need to walk towards the coyote and increase the intensity of your hazing. The coyote may run away, but then stop after a distance and look at you. It is important to continue to go after the coyote until they completely leave the area. You may need to use different tactics, such as noisemakers, stomping your feet, or spraying the coyote with a hose, to get them to leave.

## Dog-walking tools

There are several tools that you can carry with you while walking your dog that can be used to repel coyotes. These include:

### Homemade noisemakers [PDF]

Whistle or small air horn (you can purchase small air horn "necklaces")

Squirt guns

Pepper spray

Sticks or other objects to throw towards (but not at) the coyote

## In your yard

Remember, keeping pets and pet food inside is the best way to keep coyotes out of your yard. If you do encounter coyotes, all of the above methods can be used in your yard at home. First, try the "Go away coyote!" method (yell and wave your arms as you approach the coyote). Here are some additional methods you can also use:

Squirt the coyote with your garden hose

Spray the coyote with vinegar water

Bang pots and pans together

## Important things to remember

Never run away from a coyote!

The coyote may not leave at first, but if you approach them closer and/or increase the intensity of your hazing, they will run away.

If the coyote runs away a short distance and then stops and looks at you, continue hazing until he leaves the area entirely.

After you have successfully hazed a coyote, they may return. Continue to haze the coyote as you did before; it usually takes only one or two times to haze a coyote away for good.

## Resources

[Solutions for Coyote Conflicts \[PDF\]](#)

[Preventing Coyote Conflicts \[PDF\]](#)

[Coyote Hazing Guidelines \[PDF\]](#)

[Coyote Management Plan \[PDF\]](#)

[Coyote Advocate Toolkit \[PDF\]](#)

\*Thank you to Pam Weld for this important safety information.

## MARYLAND BIKE LAWS



It's important to know your legal rights (and duties) when bicycling in Maryland. This is a general overview of Maryland's bicycle laws. To see them in their completion, please visit [Maryland's Department of Transportation](#). For any questions about this State's bike laws, or about your rights to the road, contact [Maryland's Bike Law Attorney Peter Wilborn](#) directly.

### RIGHT TO THE ROAD

Bicycles are defined as vehicles and generally have the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicle drivers.

### WHERE TO RIDE

- Bicyclists are required to ride as closely as practicable and safe to the right of the road in travel lanes.
- Bicyclists are required to use bike lanes paved to a smooth surface when available and may not ride on the roadway except when passing, avoiding hazards and avoiding a mandatory turn lane.
- Bicycles are generally allowed on sidewalks by local ordinances. Bicyclists on sidewalks must yield the right of way to pedestrians. Check local ordinances for variations on this rule.

### HOW TO RIDE



- Bicyclists may not ride more than two (2) abreast and may not impede traffic.
- Bicyclists must come to a complete stop at all stop signs and traffic lights displaying a red signal.
- Bicyclists must signal when turning or coming to a stop, and if safe to do so, at least 100 feet before the turn.

## Bicyclists Overtaking Cars

Bicyclists must exercise due care when safely passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction of travel.

## Car Overtaking Bicyclists

- Motor vehicle drivers are required to pass leaving a minimum of three (3) feet of space when passing bicyclists.
- Motor vehicle drivers should be able to see the bicyclist in their rearview mirror before returning to the original lane of travel. After passing, the driver must be clear of the bicyclist before making any turns.

## EQUIPMENT

- Bicyclists under the age of 16 are required to wear a properly fastened helmet.
- At night, bicycles must be equipped with a front white light and a rear red reflector or red light visible, both visible from 600 feet away.
- Every bicycle must have brakes which will enable the bicyclist to stop from a speed of 10 miles per hour within 15 feet on dry, level, clean pavement.
- Bicycles may be equipped with a bell or horn for audible signaling but sirens are prohibited.

## PROHIBITIONS

- Clinging to motor vehicles while bicycling is not permitted.
- Bicycles must be operated with both hands.
- A bicycle may not carry more than the number of persons for which it is designed.
- Bicycles are not permitted on any road with a posted speed limit of fifty (50) miles per hour or faster.
- Bicyclists may not wear headsets or earplugs on both ears while riding

## Alcohol

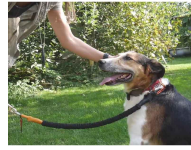
- Maryland's DUI statute does apply to cyclists as bicycles are defined as vehicles.

## Motor Vehicles & Dooring

- Motor vehicle drivers may not throw articles at or in the direction of bicyclists.
- Motor vehicle doors cannot be opened with the intent to strike, injure, or interfere with a bicyclist

\* Many thanks to Harold Minton for reminding us of this important information!

# Montgomery Parks Urges Owners to Keep Their Dogs On Leashes



written by MCS Staff August 13, 2023

Montgomery Parks is encouraging dog owners to show their pets and the public some love this August, by keeping their dogs leashed at all times in public, unless visiting a dog park where dogs are permitted to be off leash. National Dog Month and the dog days of August are the perfect time for a stroll in the park, but it's critical that dogs be on-leash for their own safety and everyone else's.

"We have had reports in area parks about off-leash dogs fighting, chasing people, injuring wildlife, getting lost or being hit by cars traveling on nearby roads," said Captain Tracy Lieberman, Park Police public information officer. "Even the best-behaved dog can get scared and act aggressively or take off running. Holding the leash keeps the pet owner in control of the situation."

Leashing dogs in public is not just a suggestion, it is the law in Montgomery County and a regulation in Montgomery Parks. Violators could be fined up to \$50 for the first offense and \$100 for repeat infractions. But Montgomery Parks is hoping a social media push will promote good behavior by dog owners. The Show Us Your Leash campaign asks park visitors to take a picture of their pet enjoying a park, on-leash, then post it on Instagram or Twitter and tag Montgomery Parks. Dogs are allowed off-leash in the eight dedicated dog parks within Montgomery Parks system:



## The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION ON COMMON OWNERSHIP COMMUNITIES**

Montgomery County recognizes that a substantial proportion of all its citizens now live in condominium and homeowner associations, and in housing cooperatives, generally called "common ownership communities." In order to better serve the special needs of these communities, to act as their advocate, and to maintain and improve the quality of life in these communities, the County created the Commission on Common Ownership Communities. The Commission operates under the authority of Chapter 10B of the County Code.

The Commission has 3 basic duties:

**Education:** The Commission provides free information to both members and to governing bodies about their rights and duties under Maryland law, as well as advice on how to properly operate the association and to avoid complaints. Among other tools, it offers a "Manual and Resource Guide" for boards of directors, and detailed information on architectural control, assessments, and meetings. It publishes a newsletter summarizing recent developments affecting common ownership communities. Commissioners will also speak to communities and their boards on request and welcome invitations to do so.

**Legislation:** The Commission advocates for common ownership communities concerning proposed laws and regulations at the local and State level.

**Dispute Resolution:** The Commission can hear and resolve certain disputes between members of the communities and their governing bodies, and its decisions are legally binding on the parties. Copies and easy-to-read summaries of its decisions are posted on its website and reviewed in its newsletter.

The Commission is composed of 15 volunteers who are appointed for 3-year terms. Eight members must be residents of common ownership communities and the other seven must be professionals who work with the communities, such as property managers, lawyers, developers and realtors. Every Fall, the County publishes a request for applicants to the Commission to replace those whose terms are due to expire.

For more information on the

Commission and its services, visit its website at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccoc](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccoc). If you have questions, CCOC prefers to be contacted by email. at: [CCOC@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CCOC@montgomerycountymd.gov). To receive information by email about CCOC news and events, sign up for them by going to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and following these links: 1. "I Want To;" 2. "Register, reserve, enroll;" 3. "eSubscription;" 4. "Create an Account;" 5. "Consumer Protection;" 6. "CCOC."