

We hope you enjoy our Spring Readwood. Our HOA Board of Directors and Committee members have been continually working to keep our community thriving. Read what they have been doing on the behalf of our community.

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The deadline for entries to the Fall Readwood is August 23, 2024. Articles from community members are welcome. Please submit articles to readwoodeditor@gmail.com.



READWOOD

DuFief Homes Association Newsletter Spring 2024

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

May 2024

Dear Community,

I hope everyone has had a good start to 2024! Your Board has been busy, so I want to highlight a few of our initiatives.

Front Entrance Beautification: In April, our newly established Green Team and several neighborhood volunteers planted a variety of native plants at the entrance to DuFief; please see the accompanying article for details. Note, the deer netting protecting these plantings is temporary and will be removed next year after the plants are established. Also, be sure to check out our freshly painted DuFief neighborhood signs.

Welcoming Committee: On May 5th, our Welcoming Committee hosted five new families for a breakfast reception. Note, if you are new to DuFief and have not yet received a welcoming greeting, please email board@dufief.org so we can make the appropriate connection.

Community picnic: This year we're hosting our first summer picnic on June 1st from 4:00 to 7:30PM at the pond. Food, drinks, games, music, a campfire and nature walks are planned. We have over 100 confirmed participants so be sure to respond to the Evite so we can ensure we have enough provisions. June 8th is our rain date backup.

Community communications: Your HOA is working to keep you informed and we are increasingly using our AppFolio portal system for email notifications and all ARC application processing. Please email board@dufief.org if you are having trouble connecting or require any assistance.

Friendly reminder: Our DuFief community continues to deliver strong homeowner value and rising home values but there are a few detractors. The Board regularly hears from neighbors complaining about homes with uncut grass, weeds, non-drivable vehicles, visible trash or recycling containers and or just unsightly curb appearance in our community. While the HOA and Montgomery County 311 services have limited authorities, I want to personally encourage everyone to please help our community by maintaining an attractive curb side appeal of your property. If for some reason you are either unable and or require assistance, then please let us know because there are discrete volunteer services available.

I hope to see everyone at the picnic. As always, your thoughts and suggestions are welcome.

Montgomery County Grass and Tree FAQs

<https://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Solutions.aspx?SolutionId=1-3FR51B>

Grass and weeds on private property may not exceed 12 inches in height. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) enforces this code on privately owned property.

When a property owner does not cut the grass, DHCA is authorized to cut the grass and bill the owner. If the owner does not pay the bill, a lien may be placed on the property.

The County cannot require a property owner to cut back LIVE tree branches that overhang a neighbor's property. If there are dead branches or a dead tree, department responsibility depends on the location of the tree. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has responsibility for trees on County property, Right-of-way, along roads, (see "Request to Inspect, Remove or Prune County Tree" while DHCA Housing Code Enforcement handles dead trees, branches on private property. It is the responsibility of the property owner where the tree is located to maintain the tree. If a tree has fallen, the property owner is responsible for removing that portion of the tree that lies on their property and the County cannot force a property owner to remove a fallen dead tree from a neighbor's property. If a property owner is unable to resolve a dispute regarding a dead tree that has fallen from an adjoining property, they should contact their homeowners insurance company.

DuFief HOA Spring Community Picnic!

**Saturday June 1, 4PM-7:30PM
(Rain Date June 8th)**

**DuFief Pond & Park (Enter off Coles Chance Rd.)
All DuFief HOA Residents Welcome**

This year we are planning an afternoon/evening event to include:

**Food & Drinks
Games, Music, & Family Fun
Campfire & Nature Walk**

**Volunteers are welcome:
Please contact board@dufief.org if you are able to help**



Treasurer's Report on Annual Assessments

As of May 8, 2023, the Board has collected annual dues from 284 of the 306 homes in our neighborhood (roughly 92.8%). 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.

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; twelve (12) homes that have not paid 2021 dues and twenty-two (22) 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 costs, and a potential lawsuit.

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

Brian Frank, Treasurer

Dufief Green Team Update

The Dufief Green Team has installed new plantings in two 50 ft beds, alongside the stone walls, using plants native to Maryland. Nine volunteers planted 32 shrubs and over 400 perennials that will attract birds and pollinating insects, and provide an array of color in spring, summer and fall. A list of the plants is at <https://dufief.org/green-team/>. Now we need to keep our plantings weed-free. If you can spare an hour to help, contact us at Dufiefgreenteam@gmail.org.

Upcoming Green Team activities include:

- An invasive plant removal event at the pond. The date and details of how you can participate for an hour or two will be sent out soon.
- Installation of dog waste stations at the pond to reduce the amount of pollution entering our waterways. See <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/marylander/outreach/pages/scoop%20the%20pop.aspx>.
- Nature walks along the Muddy Branch trail. Our first nature walk will be held during the Dufief summer picnic on June 1. This will be a short walk for children and their parents to identify wildlife and plants.
- A mosquito trap demonstration and giveaway, also at the Dufief Picnic, 5 gallon buckets, water, some vegetation and a bit of mosquito dunk are as effective as spraying pesticides! We will have 10 bucket traps to give away.

Also, the Green Team's co-leaders are offering yard visits to Dufief residents interested in adding native plants to their landscapes. We can give pointers on which plants to choose for your yard conditions and how to make your landscape a supportive environment for birds and pollinators.

To join the Dufief Green Team, contact us at Dufiefgreenteam@gmail.com. We welcome your participation, whether for one activity or many, as well as your ideas. For all updates on our activities, go to <https://dufief.org/green-team/>.

Noteworthy News



A neighbor's proposal-

I propose the creation of a network that would enable these families to meet, share resources, and support one another through various activities. Here are some initiatives I believe would enhance our community's inclusivity and vibrancy:

- **Social Events and Gatherings:** Such as organized playdates at our underutilized community playgrounds and stroller walks for caregivers, these events would be tailored to be kid-friendly and allow families to bond over shared experiences.
- **Communication Channels:** Setting up dedicated communication platforms for event planning, sharing tips, and resources.
- **Equipment Sharing and Giveaways:** Facilitating the exchange or giveaway of baby and kid gear within the community to help new parents.
- **Collecting Community Feedback:** Gathering and presenting family-centric requests or suggestions to the board.
- **Local Babysitter Network:** Creating a database of trusted babysitters within our neighborhood, enhancing convenience and safety for parents.

If you would be interested in helping create this network, [joining the network](#) or have any further ideas, please send your comments to the Dufief board to board@dufief.org.

Readwood Submissions

The Readwood is published quarterly. We welcome your articles, requests, and thoughts to be added to any future newsletters. Please be sure to submit your articles to Readwoodeditor@gmail.com by the following dates to be included in the next newsletter.

August 23, 2024
November 22, 2024

REMINDER:

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 for an application before doing work on the exterior of your home.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors



****This is your space to offer or ask for services from DuFief neighbors. Do you babysit, petsit, tutor, do yard maintenance, 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.

Hello neighbors! My name is Tracy Weatherford and I own an at-home baking business called Tracy's Treats. I make custom-order cakes, cupcakes, cookies, and more! All fresh ingredients and no preservatives. I have pictures on Facebook and Instagram and can be reached via email or text to place orders or answer questions. I love baking and making people happy with delicious treats! 240-994-0783, tracystreatsmaryland@gmail.com

Are you interested in adding plants native to Maryland to your garden to attract pollinators and beneficial insects? The Dufief Green Team is available to help you get started. We can discuss the selection of plants for sun or shade, dry area or wet, and which are more deer resistant than others. Or if you would just like to exchange ideas about ecological gardening practices, get in touch with us at Dufiefgreenteam@gmail.com.

Casual Tutoring available for grades 1-7 and ADHD Executive Function Coaching for grades 4-12. 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 needs. I work on an as needed basis with flexible scheduling. Please contact me at yrtutor1@gmail.com for more information. Sandi Shapiro

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. If you have questions, CCOC prefers to be contacted by email. at: CCOC@montgomerycountymd.gov. To receive information by email about CCOC news and events, sign up for them by going to 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."