



READWOOD

DuFief Homes Association Newsletter Spring 2025

Tree Tops - President's Message by Fred Mingo, HOA Board President March 2025

Dear Community,

Last Thursday night we had our Annual Board meeting at DuFief Elementary School that was attended by 36 families, so I want to provide everyone with some highlights from our meeting. Attendees included the span from original homeowners, many long-term homeowners, families with young children and one new family that just moved into DuFief. Overall, the community members in attendance were positive, voiced support and thanks for the HOA Board's activities, asked thoughtful questions about our 2024 spending and proposed budget for 2025, and then unanimously voted to approve our planned activities and 2025 budget.

Our HOA is all volunteer, so we started the meet by calling out, recognizing and thanking our many community volunteers, some who have provided decades of service. I want to include their names and areas of support today so everyone can know who in our community is helping, better understand the scope of these activities and hopefully there might be an area of interest where you might want to contribute because we can always use more help.

Elected Board Members: Fred Mingo, Jared Smith, Brian Frank, Ron Ely, Shawn McCloskey, Donna Freshwater, Angel Manzur, Moira Davenport and Ashok Prajapati. I also want to introduce and welcome Cassie Moran our newest Board Member that recently moved into DuFief.

Elected Audit Committee members: Chairman Bill Golumbskie, Mary Bell, Chris Saah, Pooja Rathore.

ARC Members: Chairman William Washington, Mandy Pereira, Rahat Sharma, Oleg Udalov. A special thank you to Herman Basara for his efforts enabling ARC AppFolio workflow automation.

Welcoming Committee: Chairwoman Alicia Clausen.

Environmental Committee: Chairwoman Moira Davenport, Roger Rasnake and Vin Kotraiah.

Webmaster: Barb Brenkworth.

Readwood Editor: Sandi Shapiro

All Round Contributor and Volunteer: Pam Weld.

Looking forward to 2025, the following lists a summary of the projected projects and activities for the year. Please contact board@dufief.org if you would like to volunteer and or

have inputs to help with any of the following:

- ARC activities to include updating the color palette with homeowner input to produce five separate color palette boards, and process improvements to ultimately validate that each home's appearance agrees with recently digitized homeowner ARC records and or appropriately grandfathered entries are established.
- Social activities to include two community wide picnics.
- Environmental Committee ongoing front entrance beautification, and the installation of park benches at the pond.
- Updating and then electronically publishing a new community directory with homeowner information from our AppFolio system.
- Updating the HOA Reserve Study.
- Pond steps and walkway refurbishment and gate installation.
- General community outreach, assistance, responding to special homeowner requests and ongoing beautification.

Finally, on behalf of the DuFief Homes Association, I want send out a special THANK YOU to Brian Frank. Brian first volunteered for the DuFief ARC almost 20 years ago and then assumed the duties as Treasurer in 2009. He has been a mainstay of our community, providing conscientious, compassionate and insightful legal and historical guidance for the multitude of decisions and actions required to effectively manage our HOA. He has contributed tirelessly and generously of both his time and resources to the betterment of our community, for which we are all thankful and grateful. More importantly, Brian has provided sound fiduciary management over our finances. As you can see by our 2025 budget, our HOA stands on solid financial ground. We owe Brian a debt of gratitude for his efforts. Fortunately, he plans on remaining active in our community so be sure to thank him when you see him or talk with him at one of our upcoming social events.

In conclusion, 2025 promises to be an exciting year for the DuFief community. With a variety of projects and activities on the horizon, there are numerous opportunities for involvement and contribution. We welcome the participation and input of all homeowners to make our neighborhood the best it can be. Together, let's work towards creating a vibrant, beautiful, and welcoming environment for everyone.

Meet our newest board member:

My name is Cassandra Moran although I usually go by Cassie. I moved to the MoCo area approximately 3 years ago for a position with the Department of Health and Human Services. I discovered the Dufief community Spring 2024 while hiking on the Muddy Branch Trail and knew immediately it was where I wanted to purchase my next home. I loved the naturesque scenery, the cleanliness of the neighborhood, and the feeling of safety. I purchased a home on Dufief Drive and moved in November 2024.

Though I was greeted with mice upon my move-in, and my mail was stolen shortly thereafter, I have felt the very warm welcome of the neighborhood and I love it here! I think it's one of the best kept secrets of this area.

I volunteered to serve on the board because I'd like to invest in and give back to the community that has already given me so much. I hope that I can in some small way help support the neighbors as we all strive to achieve the goals for the neighborhood. Items most important to me, at this time, include safety, the appearance of the neighborhood, and neighbor connections. I look forward to contributing in any way I can.

Secretary's Report by Ron Ely

The Annual meeting was held on February 20th , 2025. Approximately 28 homeowners attended the meeting and community pot-luck in person, and nine attended by proxy. Some of the accomplishments which were discussed for the year included our continuing work to transition to electronic records management. Included in these records are the legacy ARC folders for people's homes. Homeowners who wish to see the records for their homes can contact the board of directors. Legacy meeting minutes have also been scanned, and are being archived in electronic format in Appfolio and are available upon request. We anticipate these records will be published to the DuFief.org website in the near future.

The ARC discussed a number of ongoing activities, including the need to reconcile the current state of homes with records that are in some cases incomplete. This is expected to be an ongoing activity in 2025.

The Environmental Committee discussed their accomplishments beautifying the front entrance area and plans for continuing to make such improvements in the coming year. The community elected Fred Mingo and Ron Ely to return to the board, and also new board member Cassie Moran. In addition, the community elected Mary Bell , Bill Golumbfskie, Pooja Rathore, and Chris Saah to serve on the audit committee.

Please submit your dues if you have not done so yet.

The DuFief HOA covenants permit the maximum dues assessment to increase by up to 3% per year. The Board has decided the Maximum Annual Assessment will increase by 3% to \$255.35. However the board also decided that each home will only be assessed \$245.00 for 2025, rather than the maximum amount allowable. 2025 dues will be \$245.00 per lot. On January 1, 2025, you will receive an invoice from AppFolio which is the platform that we use for the management of our homeowners association. Payments will be able to be made by credit or debit card, ACH transfer. For those of you who wish to make payment by check, that option will also be available and you can mail your check to DuFief Homes Association, Inc., PO Box 3034, Gaithersburg, MD 20885.

DuFief Green Team

Shrub and Tree Giveaway:

Your HOA is sponsoring the Green Team's giveaway of 50 trees and shrubs next Spring, distributed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources at \$3 a piece. We will have 25 serviceberry trees and 25 arrowwood viburnum shrubs to offer free to DuFief residents, one plant per household. These will be very small plants, 6 - 12 inches, and require some tender loving care for their first few years in your yard. Both species offer Spring flowers for nectar and pollen for pollinators, and berries in Fall for birds. Let us know at dufiefgreenteam@gmail.com if you're interested. There will be a drawing if we hear from over 50 households.

Nature/Bird walks:

Spring is coming and so are DuFief's Green Team nature and bird walks! Join us on Saturday, March 22 at 8 a.m. and Wednesday, April 16 at 9:00 a.m. for a ramble along the Muddy Branch Greenway. We will walk about 2 miles round trip looking for birds and emerging plants. Meet at the Pollinator Gardens at the entrance on DuFief Drive and Rte 28. Let us know if you can join us by sending an email to dufiefgreenteam@gmail.com. **Bring binoculars** or mention in your email if you don't have any. We'll try to bring extras.

Invasive Weed Day, Saturday, May 3

Last July, Green Team members spent a morning removing invasive wineberries from an area around the pond. On Saturday, May 3 we will tackle garlic mustard, another invasive plant species that has spread near the pond. More details to come, but mark your calendars if you are able to join us.

Spotted Lanternfly in DuFief

Have you seen this insect in your yard?



This is a spotted lanternfly sighted in a DuFief backyard. It is an invasive insect that is mainly a threat to agricultural crops. It does not harm humans. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is tracking the spread of this invasive population and you can report any sightings [here](#). You do not need to spray pesticides to control this insect in your yard. Instead, it is recommended that you crush them with gloved hands or with your feet, when possible. You can learn more about this insect at this [site](#).

Yard Visits:

Would you like to add native plants to your yard but don't know where to start? Green Team members Roger Rasnake and Moira Davenport will make a 'yard visit' to give you pointers on plants that will do well in your landscape. Contact us at dufiefgreenteam@gmail.com.

ance to visit with neighbors old and new.

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



Have you visited our local community center recently? New activities are added often.

The Nancy H. Dacek North Potomac Community Recreation Center is northwest of the City of Rockville, located in a 6.5-square-mile area that includes more than 8,000 households and approximately 24,000 residents. The center is adjacent to the 11-acre Big Pines Local Park, which includes a playground, basketball court, two tennis courts and a picnic area.

This eco-friendly, LEED certified, state-of-the-art recreational facility offers a variety of programs and activities for people of all ages, including programs for seniors.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/facilities/recreationcenters/northpotomac.html>

****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.

Tutoring available for grades 1-6 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 or how to help your child? I am a veteran MCPS teacher, and an experienced tutor who specializes with students with ADHD who can help your child be successful. I work on an as needed basis with flexible scheduling. Please contact me at Love to Learn ADHD Tutoring 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."