DISCOVERY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
www.DiscoveryHOA.com
NEWSLETTER – APRIL, 2013

DISCOVERY HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PRESIDENTS CORNER
Jack Lundberg

As I write this, the snow is falling making this a winter wonderland. We truly live in a precious area and Discovery is a jewel among the residential areas in our city.

Which leads me to note the Waldo Canyon fire of last summer was a near miss for us, but served as a wakeup call. The prediction for the summer of 2013 is for more of that weather which facilitated the 2012 blaze. Now that we have been served notice of the ongoing danger, it is prudent to take action to mitigate it. I have recently attended two briefings by CSFD which were very explicit as to dangerous conditions, contributing to the substantial property loss and how such can be eliminated, or at least, reduced. I have a pdf file from one of these presentations which I will gladly forward to you at your request. My contact info is on the Discovery web site.

A significant hazard, prolific in Discovery, is flammable landscaping. Many of you have beautiful juniper shrubbery in your yards. Beautiful as this may be, it is a substantial fire hazard … referred to by fire fighters as “gasoline on a stick”. Firebrands from advancing wildfire easily ignite this shrubbery which will, in turn, ignite an adjacent flammable house structure, or serve as a “ladder” to ignite nearby trees. If the fire can rise to the tree canopy, the spread rate is dramatically increased. I urge you to consider elimination of juniper in your landscaping, or at least confine it to “stand alone” status away.
from the house and not under trees. Much of the Waldo Canyon Fire property loss was by house-to-house fire. In addition to landscaping fire hazard, a home catching fire from a firebrand may serve to ignite adjacent homes. Fortunately, houses in Discovery generally have a greater separation distance than in most developments, so this is not our greatest risk. Shake shingles – no longer allowed for new construction in the City – are a significant and obvious fire hazard, as is any horizontal wooden surface (i.e. decks). Please do what you can do to eliminate these fire hazards. Note, in conjunction with the CSFD, we will have neighborhood chipping performed on June 17 and September 2nd this year. There are great opportunities to clean up the trees and shrubs and not have to worry about getting rid of the cuttings. Also, CSFD offers a free on-site consultation to determine what specific actions you can take on your property to reduce wildfire risk. This can be scheduled by calling 719-385-7342.

The cost of our property insurance will likely increase as a result of the Waldo Canyon Fire loss. Your insurance company may look favorably on activities you take to reduce fire risk. It may be possible to deduct up to $2500 from your 2013 taxable income for Federal Income Tax calculations for qualifying fire mitigation expenses.

In addition to protecting your property from fire, it is important to be alert for criminal activity. Fortunately, Discovery has not experienced much crime, but recently, nearby areas have. Most of this has been property theft and burglary. Obviously, you should be alert. For data on area crime, go to the CSPD Incident report (http://www.myneighborhoodupdate.net) where you can see police activity for our area … and any area of the country.

Lest my comments be limited to badgering you to perform fire mitigation and lock doors, allow me to swerve into a favorite subject of mine – neighbors helping neighbors to protect each other. Together with some of your neighbors, I put together some information on establishing PODs (Protecting Our Discovery). This is a formal gathering of neighbors with visibility of each other’s property to watch for suspicious activity, notify members of danger (not all received reverse 911 calls to evacuate last summer), and generally make a positive contribution to neighborhood security. We investigated Neighborhood Watch programs, but considered them too structured for our needs. The POD concept is simple and effective. I hope to have POD info on our web site soon, but should you wish to learn more, contact me and I will send you a couple of pages describing the concept and its implementation.

Regarding reverse 911 calls from public safety, you must be registered to receive these. Go to www.elpasoteller911.org where you can register land lines and cell phones to receive notification in a public safety emergency. Having cell phones registered is important, as demonstrated in the Waldo Canyon Fire, when some such alerts went to home phones when nobody was home.

That concludes my comments, except to note that we (DHOA) are solvent and I have the privilege of working with a really competent group of officers and staff. We greatly appreciate the willingness of Discovery residents to assist us in keeping this a great place to live.

Attached is a Preparedness Guide for Flash Flooding and Debris Flow just released by El Paso County with the latest information on what to do when we have flash flooding due to the Waldo Burn scar. Discovery properties that back up to Dry Creek should be aware of flooding potential.
COVENANT COMPLIANCE
Thom Kummer and Matt Meister

Spring Is Here!

First off, let us say “thank you” to all of you. It has been a pleasure for Matt and me getting to meet and talk to many of you as we have wandered the neighborhood conducting the reviews or dealing with other covenant compliance business. On the occasions where we have had compliance issues, you have all been gracious and a joy to work with. It makes us proud of our great community and glad we chose to live in Discovery.

Sometimes, I wonder if spring has not been here all winter, but the real thing is just around the corner. That means getting the yard ready for another summer. It also means the spring review is coming up. Here are some easy things you can add to your spring cleanup list to ensure your compliance with the covenants and make your yard more attractive. These are items that were common issues found in last year’s review:

• Spurge: Myrtle Spurge is a common plant in our area. It is an exotic invasive and very toxic to people and animals. It grows well in our climate and soils and is (unfortunately) attractive to look at. It is a list-A noxious weed according to the Colorado Department of Agriculture and should be eradicated. Remove by digging out the plant as deeply as you can. Moisten the soil and wear protective gloves and eyewear. For more information go to www.colorado.gov/ag and type “myrtle spurge” in the search box.

• General Weeds: Spring is a great time for removing weeds by pulling or with herbicides from landscaping and, especially, sidewalks.

• Overhanging Shrubs and Trees: City Ordinance requires trees and shrubs to be trimmed to the full width of the sidewalk to a height of 8 feet.

• Dead Lawn: Water is at a premium and grass takes plenty more than nature provides in our climate. Xeriscaping, rock, and other materials can replace grass if watering grass and maintaining soils are becoming time-or cost-prohibitive. Please be sure to submit any plans to the Architectural Review Committee for approval before beginning any landscaping or other outdoor projects. Approval is usually quick and painless.

Please feel free to contact Thom Kummer or Matt Meister with any questions or concerns.
ANNUAL DUES NOTICES

Carole Thurston, Secretary, Treasurer

On April 2, 2013 the Annual Dues Notices were mailed to all the Discovery HOA property owners. As of April 25 we have received payment from over half of the property owners. Please return your payment by May 1, 2013 to avoid any late charges. Including your email address is very helpful in order to contact as many residents as possible in a timely and cost effective manner.

In past years about 50% of our Discovery property owners have participated in contributed to the “voluntary” contributions, which we approved to be included in your dues notice. The contribution to the Police Patrol gives us additional dollars to provide more hours of patrol for our neighborhoods at various times during the summer and holidays and to hopefully control vandalism.

Likewise, the voluntary additional dues option can be used to supplement the general fund, mandated dollars ($30.00 per year) to be used as needed.

Thank you for you generosity, it is greatly appreciated.

Don’t let your dues notice get lost in all your reminders!

www.DiscoveryHOA.com

Yes, that’s our web site address – but right now we’ve taken down links that go nowhere and outdated information. We will be rebuilding a vibrant and useful information site for you soon. It may take a while, but stay tuned.

CALLS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

You notice a suspicious car driving slowly through your neighborhood; someone knocks on your door or rings the bell and won’t identify themselves; an unfamiliar van parks in your neighbor’s driveway and they are away at work or on vacation; these are some but certainly not all of the possible scenarios that could prompt you to call the police. Be sure to get descriptions of people, license plate numbers and a description of the vehicle. If what you are observing or experiencing is not a threatening emergency, please call 444-7000 and report what you see. Of course, if there is eminent danger or an emergency, immediately call 911.
Warm days are coming – even if you’re reading this during a spring snow storm. Bears have already been sighted in some areas of Colorado Springs and the warmer days and nights are their invitation to come out of hibernation.

There are always a number of bears roaming around the Discovery neighborhoods looking for food and a place to nap during the day. Please follow a few simple rules to stay safe:

- Keep your garbage can in your garage or an enclosed area
- Don’t put your garbage can out the night before pick-up
- Observe them from a distance – don’t approach them
- Don’t leave bird feeders or pet food out on your deck or patio – that will attract them
- Keep your garage door and patio door closed – they will get in your refrigerator or freezer
- Call the Department of Wildlife 719-227-5200 if you observe an aggressive bear

WATER RESTRICTIONS

THE DROUGHT IS REAL! Colorado Springs Utilities has issued a water restriction order, which is in effect from April 1 – October 1, 2013.

Odd number residential addresses water on Tuesdays and Saturdays - 3 hours per day
Even number residential addresses water on Sundays and Wednesdays - 3 hours per day.

You may not water between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (May 1 through October 1)

Trees, flowers beds, gardens and shrubs can be watered any day using a handheld hose with a positive shutoff nozzle. It’s best to water in the cool hours of the day or evening.

Violators will receive a warning notice from CSU for the first offense and fines will be assessed for additional violations.

You can keep your landscaping alive with these restrictions.

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THE WEEK OF JUNE 17TH AND THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 2

It’s that time of year again to participate in the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSPD) Fire Mitigation program for clearing our property of fire fuels and providing a safer environment that lessens the chance of wildfire in our area.

We have been assigned two (2) chipping weeks this year as a result of additional grants that the CSPD were awarded. This will give us the opportunity to do some significant mitigation in Discovery. This is free to our residents.

You **must** have had a property evaluation in the last 5 years and/or attended a presentation by the Fire Wise personnel to participate in the chipping. **We have scheduled a presentation for Discovery property owners on Thursday, May 23, 6:30 p.m. at Woodmen Valley Chapel, in room #107 on the lower level of the main church. Entrance is located on the lower eastside of the building.** We urge you to attend and sign-up for this opportunity protect your property and those around you. There’s something for all of us to learn even if we’ve had prior evaluations.

Please read the additional information and ideas of how to protect you and your family that are included in the newsletter.

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ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
Tom Kerwin

Architectural Review Committee Update

Spring is here and the Architectural Review Committee has received many requests in anticipation of warm weather.

Many of the requests received since the Waldo Canyon fire have been related to reducing the risk to homes during a wildfire. Primarily there have been three types of requests: roof replacement, siding replacement, and landscaping modifications.

Replacing shake roofs with fire resistant materials is definitely a priority for many homeowners. If you have a shake roof please consider submitting a request as soon as possible with adequate lead time. There are so many acceptable roof types available that are high quality, visually appealing, fire, and wind resistant that it is not feasible to maintain an approved list.

Replacing siding with stucco is another popular request. Like roofing materials there are many options available that reduce risk to your home. The ARC treats these like a repainting request. So, please select the colors for stucco that are earth tone.

Another type of high volume request received is landscape changes related to fire mitigation. These requests are probably the more complicated requests. When you submit a landscaping request please explain what will be removed (junipers, trees, bushes) and their location. Also, explain what will replace the removed items. It is very helpful if you submit a property layout highlighting the changes you are requesting. Some homeowners have taken pictures of the existing landscape and sent them via email. Anything that adds clarity to the request helps the ARC quickly review and approve your request.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the updated covenants. The document is much easier to read and provides guidance on what changes are allowed. According to the covenants the ARC has thirty days to approve a request, so please submit your request with adequate lead time.

Thanks for your cooperation and support.
Tom Kerwin
Chair, Architectural Review Committee