# Summit Park Presidents Letter – September 24, 2019

Dear Neighbors,

It was great to see so many of you at this year’s annual meeting.  We had a lively  and productive discussion. If you were not able to attend please visit our website at [**www.summitparkhoa.com**](http://www.summitparkhoa.com).  You’ll find meeting minutes, the budget approved for this fiscal year and all of the materials presented at the meeting, and our board member names and contact information.

I’ll briefly recap our meeting and then talk about the discussion we had on rental property.

Our community continues to be in good condition. We had some paving done at the top end of Grandview Drive and on the Extension from the corner of Summit Park Trail approximately 700 feet north. We also had some run off and drainage improvements made at the end of Summit Park Trail. In addition we had guardrails installed on the west side of Grandview Drive to identify the location of the large culverts and to provide some protection to cars that may slide in that direction during inclement weather. Next year’s paving priority will be improving the safety of the sharp curve on Grandview Drive Extension by widening it and providing additional paving.

In the past we’ve been asked about dues in other neighborhoods.  Beth Campbell, our new Board Secretary, looked at three neighborhoods close by.  Goshen is $850/year, Willow Trace is $450/year and Sorrento Skies is $250. The first two have private roads as we do, hence the higher cost. Sorrento’s main road is state maintained. The neighborhoods also differ in size and number of homeowners. Our dues seem in line with our size and costs and realtors have commented on the reasonableness relative to other neighborhoods they’re familiar with. Fortunately we also have a strong reserve making Summit Park attractive to buyers. Also, property values continue to appreciate in the High Country. In Watauga County sales are up 12% and the median home price is up 20% since 2017.

       On to rentals ...

In the past two or three years the number of homes available to rent in Summit Park has doubled. Based on our collective knowledge of the properties we estimate that 20% of homes are now rented. Not surprisingly the number of concerns about renter behavior, and about the future of the community, has also increased. So we decided to have a discussion on this at the meeting.  And to mitigate the concerns expressed we created several helpful documents described below to be used by rental owners.

There was a very good discussion about the pros and cons of rentals being allowed in the community.  This is becoming a concern nationally as rentals have become easy to do using VRBO, Air B&B and similar platforms, and as a result, the character of neighborhoods is changing.

To be clear, our governing documents allow rentals,  for single family residential purposes only.  We consulted with our attorney and there is a legal definition of this, namely one or more people related by blood or marriage.  We ask that rental property owners adhere to this requirement and also inform any rental agents.  Our Rules also specify that road passage should not be blocked and that no activity which disturbs neighbors enjoyment of their property is allowed. These are the most cited issues. Property owners are responsible for ensuring renters observe these rules. In the meeting materials posted on our website, rental owners will find three pages to be used with your other rental information for agents and renters. These include an excerpt of pertinent neighborhood Rules, a copy of the Watauga County Noise Ordinance and a Notice to Renters that describes Summit Park’s expectations regarding their conduct while renting.  Please post these in your home or provide to renters through whatever means suits your rental process. It was the collective view that if everyone will follow the governance rules already in place, and if neighbors of rental property will inform owners of their concerns when they occur, that the situation will improve.

There was also sentiment expressed that perhaps there should be some changes to our rental policy.  Lengthening the rental period to 30 days was suggested. Capping the number of rentals in the neighborhood was another consideration.  Because renting property is such an important concern to everyone in the community we agreed to formally survey all HOA members to solicit their opinions and suggestions on the subject.  The board will work on a survey format to send to everyone. So as not to raise any undue concern I would point out that any changes which might be made in the future will be based on this feedback along with annual meeting discussions,  and could only be made by a vote of the members.

I would like to remind everyone of the need to obtain board approval for home improvements that include foundations or changes to the exterior appearance of their homes. Per our covenants, impact fees may be required and material selection is subject to review according to our deed restrictions. Thanks to all who have already complied. One other reminder is that signs are not to be placed on common property of the association. This includes For Sale signs. These may be used on your own private property. Finally, I’d like to thank all of you for continuing to take great care of your homes, lots and the neighborhood. We get many positive comments from realtors and visitors about it’s natural beauty and good physical and financial condition. And if you haven’t noticed, there is a new home under construction on Grandview Drive Extension, another good indicator of the attractiveness of Summit Park.

We hope you’ll join us next August for the meeting and the potluck. It’s been a great way to meet many new neighbors and friends.  Tony and Anna Gentile hosted a wonderful party for us all this year and have offered to do it again next year.   I wish you all a good year ahead and hope you can be up here to enjoy the beautiful Fall season.

Sincerely,

Michelle Joyce

President