



Mill Creek South Homeowners Association  
P.O. Box 1283 | Charlottesville, VA 22902 | [www.millcreeksouth.org](http://www.millcreeksouth.org) | [board@millcreeksouth.org](mailto:board@millcreeksouth.org)

## Annual Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2014

### Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by David Robinson, President, at the Mill Creek South Park at 2:15 PM.

### Present:

In attendance were all six members of the Board of Directors, 12 additional homeowners, and the Office Manager.

### Welcome and Thanks:

David Robinson welcomed all to the meeting and offered gratitude to all who have contributed to the smooth running of Association business and to the betterment of the neighborhood. Special thanks went out to:

- Adele Wood for her assistance with community and neighborhood issues, helping keep Mill Creek South connected to the greater world around us.
- Liz Emrey for coordinating the annual yard sale and for supplying tables and chairs for the Annual Meeting.
- Scott Walk for seeing to it that mailboxes were repaired or replaced quickly.
- Dell Irwin, Dan Burke, and Steve Nelson for their services on the Architectural Review Committee.
- Natalie Somer for her service on the Architectural Review Committee and for being the keeper of the paint and stain.
- Doug Maldonado for his service on the Board.
- Dave Segars for his service on the Board and the Architectural Review Committee.
- John Hermsmeier for his help cleaning up and maintaining the playground.
- Michael Wheelwright for his service on the Grounds Committee.
- Mary Maldonado for maintaining the dog pots.
- Scott Walk, Joseph Greenberg, Don and Pricilla Lepsch, Sean and Karen O'Rourke, Dell and John Irwin, Natalie Somer, Peter and Nadine Urban, Lynn Pribus, and Nini Almy for their services as Block Captains.

### New Office Manager:

David Robinson introduced Carmen Trimble, our new Office Manager. She has been a bookkeeper for over 20 years and has experience working with other non-profits in Charlottesville. She can be reached by email at [office@millcreeksouth.org](mailto:office@millcreeksouth.org).

### Venue Change for the Annual Meeting:

The Board is pleased to have brought the Annual Meeting home to our very own playground and park this year instead of holding it at Cale Elementary School. Hopefully, this move, in conjunction with the addition of a picnic, will help foster community spirit.

### New Path along Stoney Creek Drive:

The new pathway along Stoney Creek Drive from Avon St. Extended to Shady Grove Court has been constructed. Striping will be completed May 18, 2014. This new walkway should increase pedestrian safety at the entrance to the

neighborhood. Michael Wheelwright, Grounds Chairman, reported that five bids were received for this project. One bid was three times too high; one was \$1,000 too low; one was a phone bid without ever conducting a site visit; and the remaining two were identical bids. In the end, the job was given to Albert Carter, who submitted one of the latter two bids. The tie breaker was that he maintains his labor force year round rather than laying employees off during the down times.

#### **Grounds Report:**

Michael Wheelwright, Grounds Chairman, reported on the grounds activities. Highlights include:

- Construction of the new pathway along Stoney Creek Drive, discussed above.
- Ongoing maintenance of the naturalized slope preservation, retention pond, and spillway.
- Tree/brush trimming and placement of new mulch to revitalize play area.
- Drainage swale constructed at the Shady Grove Road entrance to the park.
- Mill Creek South entrance sign elevated to promote drainage and reduce rot.
- Excessive rain followed by windstorms weakened the root balls of some mature trees. A 150 year old White Oak on Homestead Lane had to be removed because it was threatening to fall on the residence.
- The Open Space Land Use Policy and the Common Area Woodland Policy were adopted by the Board. Both are included in the grounds report and will be posted on the Mill Creek South website.

#### **ARC Report:**

There were a few requests for stain this year.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

At present, the office of Treasurer is vacant. David Robinson, President, provided a brief synopsis of the current financial state. There is approximately \$35,000 in the reserve fund and \$19,000 in the operating fund. Expenses for the new pathway along Stoney Creek Drive will be about \$11,000. Our new Office Manager, Carmen Trimble, has processed all dues payments received thus far. Currently, 39 homes have outstanding dues. Reminder notes will be sent.

#### **Mailbox Maintenance Follow-up:**

Over the last year we confirmed that the Covenants and Virginia State law provide homeowners full domain over their mailboxes. We also established that the HOA has guidelines about mailbox condition and style. While these guidelines may not be technically enforceable, they are the established norm for the neighborhood and are generally accepted as the standard to strive for. This issue has been a learning experience that hopefully has led to a neater community presence.

#### **Albemarle County Trash Facility Hearing:**

Mill Creek South's involvement in the Albemarle County proposed trash facility hearing is just one example of how our homeowners mobilize as a community in response to local issues. We gathered approximately 500 signatures on a petition against locating the facility near our neighborhood and had a strong voice at the public hearing on the matter. Our actions helped rally other communities to voice their concerns to county leaders as well.

#### **Fire:**

A recent fire that began in the chimney flue/attic area of a house on Homestead Lane caused extensive damage requiring the house to be gutted and repaired. No one was injured.

#### **Biscuit Run Update:**

Sally Mank reminded everyone that it is trespassing to venture onto Biscuit Run property. Folks on four-wheelers have been heard back there. Behind Mill Creek South and the adjacent subdivisions is a land buffer where it is permissible to walk. Neighbors are encouraged to call county police (not 911) if they see or hear anyone causing trouble on the Biscuit Run property. Preliminary plans for development of the state park can be seen on the Charlottesville Tomorrow website.

## **HOA Governance:**

Expiring terms for several members of the Board of Directors left only David Robinson, Dave Segars, and Michael Wheelwright remaining as Directors. The association's bylaws require seven members on the Board of Directors. Dave Segars offered to volunteer for an officer position on the Board if someone present at the Annual Meeting would fill his at-large position. Mary Maldonado nominated herself to this position. Michael Wheelwright made a motion to accept her nomination; it was seconded and passed by a vote of those in attendance. Although there are now enough Directors to meet a quorum to be able to conduct any official business, three additional directors are desired. No nominations were received prior to the Annual Meeting. The Board of Directors will elect the officers. Dave Segars is interested in becoming the Treasurer, leaving the offices of Vice President and Secretary unfilled. The core responsibility of the Board is to oversee the ownership and management of the common areas and community funds. Beyond this responsibility, the Board may undertake projects for the betterment of the community as desired. Volunteers are needed to spread the workload! Please contact the Board at [board@millcreeksouth.org](mailto:board@millcreeksouth.org) if you would like to volunteer.

## **Plantings:**

Plantings in the common areas had a disappointing outcome this past year. Plumbago that supposedly was hardy did not survive and had to be replanted. The nandina was hardy, but has suffered from vole and rabbit damage. Some of the annuals did well. Overall, though, the beautiful plan did not work well. The question now is how to proceed. Although the annuals did well, they are labor intensive to replant each year. John Hermsmeier suggested planting native wildflowers and perennials that have a proven history of survival in our area. Dick and Natalie Somer have low-growing sedum in their yard that has been quite successful and might be a good choice to incorporate into the common areas. The Grounds Committee will review the options and develop a plan.

## **Projects/Initiatives for the Year Ahead and Wish List Items:**

### Annual Meeting Date Change:

Modify the bylaws to reflect a change in the Annual Meeting date from March to May.

### Update the Website:

David Robinson and Carmen Trimble will work together to update the website, including updating the content, improving website aesthetics, posting photos, and expanding vendor referrals.

### Promote community spirit:

The board would like to promote social events so that Mill Creek South neighbors can meet and get to know one another better. Ideas to explore include fostering communication about play groups for children, running/walking clubs, and dog socializing opportunities.

### Modify the guidelines for propane tank colors to address propane tank safety issue.

Current guidelines from the ARC in the Homeowner Disclosure Packet say propane tanks should be painted the same color as the house. However, tanks that are painted a dark color may absorb too much heat from the sun, leading to an unsafe expansion of the gaseous portion of the propane. Therefore, propane tanks should be painted a lighter, reflective color. Likewise, rusty tanks may absorb an excessive amount of heat and therefore should be scraped and repainted an appropriate, reflective color. As noted in the guidelines, concealing vegetation should be placed in front of tanks that can be seen from the road or common areas.

### Entrance landscaping:

Re-evaluate the landscaping at the subdivision entrance in an ongoing effort to implement a more sustainable plan. Consider hiring John Hermsmeier's company to assist with this project.

### Smoke detector replacement:

The local fire station will provide and install new smoke detectors to any home in our neighborhood. Adele Wood and David Robinson will organize a community event to bring this valuable outreach to Mill Creek South.

#### Dog run:

With few fenced in yards and a requirement that dogs be leashed when in off the owner's property, dogs, especially puppies, have few options for running freely for exercise. Mary Maldonado has suggested installing a small dog run in the park area. The dogs would then have a safe place to run and exercise, work off excess energy, and socialize with other dogs. Owners could meet other owners, building community ties. Dog runs are a desirable amenity and could be a good selling point for the neighborhood. A dog pot would be a logical companion to a run, and Mary offered to service the dog pot. Questions to be explored include size of the run, liability issues, controlling access to the run, and construction options. One idea to be explored is building the run with movable fencing panels so that the area could be opened up for events such as the Annual Meeting. A semi-permanent installation would prove useful should utility work ever need to be performed on the sewer line that runs through the park area. Mary and Doug Maldonado will explore the options and craft a proposal for the dog run.

#### Swing set:

A number of homeowners have proposed adding a swing set to the playground. Mark Sherriff will research this option.

#### Mini soccer field at park:

Dave and Kathy Segars will explore this option.

#### Pavilion:

David Robinson proposed constructing a pavilion in the park. The greatest expense would be about \$1,000 for the trusses. The plan would be to set the structure into the hillside across from the play structures, outside the sewer line right-of-way. David will get plans and develop a cost estimate for the project.

#### Cabin:

John Hermsmeier suggested building a cabin-like structure in the park area that might be enclosable and lockable, use pocket doors, include a fireplace, and be rentable.

#### Natural area maintenance and beautification:

In order to preserve our natural areas and promote their use and enjoyment by our neighborhood residents, organize community events to clean up around the pond, maintain the trails, and keep the park neat and tidy.

#### Community garden:

Michael Wheelwright will explore the options for creating a community garden. One possible location that receives sufficient sunshine would be near the intersection of Arrow Wood Drive and Whispering Oaks Drive. Issues to consider include irrigation, sunlight, deer and other pests, and access.

#### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:39 PM.

#### **Future Meetings:**

Board Meeting, Wednesday, July 16, 2014

Submitted by Carmen Trimble.