

Seneca Forest Community Association



Community Newsletter
Winter 2021



Seneca Forest Community Association, Germantown, Maryland

Trash and Birds

Seneca, we have a problem...

Seemingly every trash collection day there is loose trash strewn through the common areas and private yards. Mostly, the trash has spilled from flimsy or untied trash bags. Many of these bags have been picked apart by crows. We have even seen turkey vultures scavenging through the bags. This situation has gotten way out of control yet many residents don't seem to be taking any action to control this. It will only get worse as more and more animals 'learn' about the feast.

The Board and Management are working with the trash company to get earlier pickup service which could help the situation. This MAY involve a change in trash collection days. Information will follow if necessary.

Regardless, we need EVERYONE'S help to minimize the trash spillage as soon as possible. Here are some recommendations:

- First and foremost, **DO NOT** place trash out prior to 5 pm the evening before pick up.
- Consider using a trash can and lid (best advice)
- Use heavy duty **BLACK** trash bags rather than white kitchen bags
- Use scented bags, or spray with Lysol
- **DO NOT USE** grocery bags

The current situation is not only a horrible eyesore but clearly a health issue. There is also the likelihood of RATS getting in on the action, if they are not already. Imagine, too, having guests over or even trying to sell or rent your home when the community is strewn with garbage and/or infested with rats.

The Board is considering mandating the use of **trash cans**. The Board would prefer not to have to impose this, but will do so if the situation does not get under control with voluntary efforts of the residents.

Lastly, we would like to say a huge THANK YOU to those of you who are cleaning up these messy areas on your own after the trash is collected. Your service to the community is noticed and very much appreciated.

Seneca Forest HOA Board of Directors Meetings



Your Board of Directors typically meets on the **3rd Wednesday** of the month at 7:00 p.m.. Due to the COVID

pandemic meetings have been held by online video conference since March of 2020, and will continue that way until further notice. (**November & December meetings are usually combined to a single meeting**)



The Association's **Annual Meeting & Election** is held in **May** each year.

Every meeting is a chance to get involved, meet your neighbors, and learn about what is going on in the entire community.

2021 Meeting Schedule



The 2021 meeting schedule is as follows:

February 17	March 17	April 21	May 19
June 16	July 21	August 18	September 15
October 20	November/December combined - TBD		

If you plan to join a meeting, please contact TMGA to confirm the date and time of the meeting. Dates are also posted in the community entrance signs and on the websites. Meetings are sometimes required to be rescheduled or cancelled due to a lack of quorum.

The Seneca Forest NEWSLETTER is only distributed in electronic format and IS NOT MAILED. Newsletters will be EMAILED to all email addresses on file at TMGA and will be posted to the HOA website. PLEASE CALL (301-948-6666 x 113) OR SEND AN EMAIL (asiefert@tmgainc.com) TO PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

Check out and bookmark the Seneca Forest portal at www.tmgainc.com/senecaforest.

FIRELANES

Management has received numerous complaints from residents regarding vehicles parking in firelanes. In accordance with the Montgomery County Fire Code and for everyone's safety, these vehicles are being towed. This also holds true for vehicles illegally parked in the street.

Vehicles blocking the street or firelanes create an urgent danger to the safety of ALL residents. Save yourself the towing fee, or the County's \$250 fine, ...park only in approved parking spaces.

Thinking of Selling Your Home?



If you are planning to sell your home, please remember that you are responsible for providing the purchaser with a copy of the legal documents for the Seneca Forest Community Association.

As the Seller of the home, you or your agent are required by Maryland State Law to provide the prospective buyer with a "resale package" at least five days prior to settlement so they may review the Association governing documents.

The Buyer must sign at the settlement table that they have read and will abide by the governing documents.

Resale packages can be **purchased online** from the management office by visiting www.tmgainc.com, Select "**Resident Services**"; Select "**Order a Resale Package.**"



Tired of Writing Checks?

If so, take advantage of TMGA's FREE direct debit offer. Have your HOA assessment payment taken directly out of your bank account on a monthly basis.

To sign up for Direct Debit please visit the TMGA website at www.tmgainc.com, Select "**Pay Assessment**"; Select "**Direct Debit**" & follow the online directions.

Security & Safety Tips



Theft and Burglary protection

- Don't leave vehicles running. This is not only a violation of the Maryland Transportation Code, but most stolen vehicles are often later used to commit a crime.
- Install quality locks on exterior doors.
- Never leave a house key under a mat, in a mailbox, under a flower pot, etc.
- Keep garage door closed and locked.
- Report suspicious activity to (301) 279-8000.
- Invest in & use a home surveillance system.
- Ask for ID from delivery persons.
- When disposing of holiday boxes remove information about the make, model, and serial number of the item from the box and save this information for your records. Also flatten & bundle the cardboard for recycling.
- While shopping, stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you, park in well-lit spaces, lock doors, hide shopping bags/gifts in the trunk; avoid carrying large amounts of cash, be careful with purses/wallets, and do not overburden yourself with packages.

Wooded Area Etiquette

The Association requests that homeowners not dump items in the wooded areas of the community. These areas are naturalized areas, not dumping grounds.



This includes man-made items but also includes grass clippings, branches, and other yard waste. If properly prepared and placed at the curb, the County will pick up and recycle these materials into compost and mulch.

On the other end of the spectrum, please do not clear growth from the wooded areas. Beneficial insects, birds, and other woodland flora and fauna benefit from these ecosystems.



While You Are Away on Vacation



You will most likely be doing some traveling again soon. Taking some simple steps into consideration prior to your departure could play a major role in preventing a break-in or other security problems during your time away.

- ◆ Make arrangements for mail and newspaper delivery.
- ◆ Set timers for lights to give that "at home" impression.
- ◆ Make arrangements for snow shoveling.
- ◆ Notify your security service.
- ◆ Leave emergency contact information with a neighbor or friend.
- ◆ Keep heat on, at 55 degrees or warmer

Making appropriate arrangements for your home will give you the additional peace of mind to enjoy your vacation!

Montgomery County 311 Information & Service Request Line



Did you know that Montgomery County has streamlined their information and request line?

The only number you need to make information inquiries and place County service requests is (240) 777- 0311.

Just dial them up to ask questions or place a service request regarding county services such as: pruning of County apron trees, heaving of County sidewalks, reporting of county pole lights that are either out, damaged or on 24/7, reporting exposed cable lines and a multitude of other County services.

If you want to review available county services or make requests online visit:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Love your Community

Montgomery County Pet Laws

At Large: Any dog or cat is at large if it is outside the owner's premises and not leashed. The Association common areas are not the owner's premises. **Penalty for Violation: \$100 for first offense, \$500 for each subsequent violation.**



Animal Defecation: Montgomery County Code,

Sec.5-203(a) (2): An owner must not allow an animal to damage or defecate on property outside of the owner's property. An animal may defecate ... if the owner immediately removes and disposes of the feces by a sanitary method approved by the Director (Animal Services Division, Department of Police). Feces may be picked up in a plastic bag. If this bag is placed inside another plastic bag, it may be put out for disposal in your normal household trash. **Penalty for Violation - \$100**

Animal Noise: (Montgomery County Code, Sec. 5-203(a) (6): An owner must not allow an animal to cause noise that is loud enough and persistent enough to disturb another person's quiet enjoyment. **Penalty for Violation - \$100**

- Call (301) 279-8000 Police Non-emergency to report an animal bite or a violation of animal control laws.
- Call (240) 773-5925 to speak with Animal Control Inspector.
- Visit MC Animal Services for more info: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/>



Recycle Scrap Metal Recycling Call Ahead

Montgomery County will collect certain types of scrap metal from the curb on Tuesday morning if you call 240-777-0311 by 11:59 a.m. on Monday, or fill out the online form at:



www.montgomerycountymd.gov/scrapmetal

Items include: Washers and Dryers, Refrigerators (*doors must be removed*), Bikes, Sewing Machines, Grills, and Other Large Metal Items, Swing Sets (*disassembled*), Lawn Mowers

(*no riding mowers, drain the oil and gas, remove batteries – you can take oil and batteries to the Shady Grove Transfer Station. Visit www.mcrecycles.org then click on Facilities for Transfer Station hours.*)

NO Automotive Parts will be accepted at the curb!

Trash & Recycling Schedule

Trash: Monday & Thursday mornings
County Recycling: Tuesday

PLEASE...

- place trash and recycling out NO EARLIER than sunset the evening before the scheduled pick up.
- put trash in securely tied bags or in trash cans
- remove cans and recycling bins promptly after collection takes place
- **Recycling, including landscape debris, will NOT be collected if placed in plastic bags**
- **Memorial Day week – trash will be picked up Tuesday & Thursday. Recycling on Wednesday**

Bulk Trash: 1st Thursday of each month ONLY

Trash J&J, Inc. (301) 898-2109
 County Recycling www.mcrecycles.org

Reporting Association Lights



Association Lights: – The street lights within the community are owned and operated by the Association.

Please report Association lights that are damaged, cycling or out by emailing tmgainc@tmgainc.com or by calling the management office at 301-948-6666.

Please reference an exact address and street name when calling in your request.

Planning an Exterior Change?



Remember, any changes to the exterior of your home need to be approved **in advance** by the Architectural Review Committee. This includes (but is not limited to) changes to the color of your home, siding or window replacement, and major landscaping projects.

For your convenience, an Architectural Change Request Form can be requested by calling TMGA at (301) 948-6666 or it can be downloaded directly from the TMGA website at www.tmgainc.com.

Click: [My Community](#)
Enter & Select: [Seneca Forest](#)
Click: [ACC Information](#)

Architectural & Maintenance Compliance Inspections

In Spring 2021, in conjunction with the HOA Board, the TMGA management team will conduct an Annual Inspection of the homes within the community for both architectural and maintenance violations. The full community inspection last Spring resulted in the issuance of 115 notices to owners, down slightly from 2019. Each homeowner in Seneca Forest has the obligation to make architectural and property changes according to the guidelines outlined in the Architectural Change manual. Homeowners are further required to maintain their property in compliance with the Use Restrictions in the Seneca Forest Governing Documents.

The Board and management team would like to encourage all homeowners to review the Architectural Change Guidelines and Homeowner Covenants and conduct their own inspection of their property. The Board's intention is to have homeowners identify and fix any violations on their own in advance of the community wide inspection. Visit www.tmgainc.com; Click **My Community**, Enter & Select **Seneca Forest**, then Click **Documents** to view the architectural guidelines. You may also find this information on the community's own website: www.sfcahomeowners.org Also, note that the covenants are in the Seneca Forest Community Association resale package each homeowner should have received from the previous owner or builder at purchase and/or settlement.

Major violations that will be reviewed for include but are not limited to:

- Lack of maintenance on homes: missing shutters, dirty siding, rotting woodwork
- Lack of front landscape bed care: replacement of dead trees and bushes, weeding
- Garbage cans and recycle bins stored in public view
- Use of non-approved fencing style and material; color/style of storm doors
- Architectural changes made without approval by the ACC
- Painting needed on exterior trim, including the rake trim that runs above neighboring rooflines. All trim must be or McCormick Paint's WHEAT #108 or WHITE #100.