



Heavy Trash Day March 2, 2024 8:00 AM

Start off your new year with a spring clean out!

The Board has arranged for Saturday, March 2, to be our semi-annual heavy trash pickup. Mr. Chester Horton and his crew will again pick up suitable items for disposal. Please have everything out by 8:00 AM.

Look for further announcements for acceptable items.

Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF) Reminder

The 2024 Annual Maintenance Fees (AMFs) were due December 31, 2023. Homeowners submitting their AMFs after January will be charged a **\$150 late fee** plus interest at the highest legally allowed rate beginning January 1, 2024, and **any related legal fees**.

- Make your check payable to: **Woodlake Forest IV Homeowners Association, Inc. or WFIV HOA**
- Ensure your property address appears on your form of payment.
- Place your payment in the HOA mailbox to the left of the pool gate:
 - WFIV HOA
9619 ½ Bayou Brook St.
Houston, TX 77063-1061

Ellen LeBlanc, Treasurer, is available for any questions at wlfivhoatreasurer@gmail.com, or at 832-526-9267.

Your volunteer Board at work

Last fall, you voted in several of your neighbors as new and incumbent Board members. Since then, transitions to the various responsibility areas have taken place. Here are your new and continuing representatives for 2024:

President – John Williams
Vice President/Treasurer – Ellen LeBlanc
Secretary – Dorothy Thompson
Security/Lighting and Trash Collection – Kimberly Thompson
Landscaping and Irrigation – Marie Hartnett
Parking and Streets – Debbie Biagioli
Architectural and Deed Restrictions – John Harrison
Governance – Scott Cooley
Recreational Area – Scott Edwards*

**Note:* Scott Edwards was appointed upon the resignation of Margie Plotkin.

Reminder

•Please make every effort to follow our WFIV community standards included in *The Buzz*. By doing so, you are being a good neighbor.

•Complete your 2024 Directory form and drop into the HOA mailbox by the pool by the end of January. New directories will be printed and distributed in February.

•Your "For Sale" or "For Lease" signs need to be put right next to your home or in the window. Any place closer to the curb is community property, and signs are not allowed on community property areas.

•Please observe the 5 MPH speed limit in our alleyways for the safety of our residents and contractors.

Voluntary Board (continued)

Please feel free to contact your Board members with questions, comments, and even a "kudos" or two. You can find contact information in the Directory, on our website, and in various places in *The Buzz*. All of us as neighbors certainly want our WFIV community to be the best it can be. Let's all help each other to make it so!

A tidbit or two

- Our latest lighting audit showed that approximately 92% of WFIV residents do turn their lights on from dusk to dawn. Let's keep it up and do even better!
- Landscaping review and assessment of plants, shrubs, or trees that were damaged by the freeze and need re-planting will occur in early spring.
- The State of Texas regulations allow for solar panels, but HOAs do have the ability to provide certain restrictions. Please get in touch with the Architectural/Deed Restrictions Trustee for details.



A voting tip re: mail-in ballot

One of our residents, who usually votes by mail, did not receive in November the usual mail-in ballot from the Harris County Clerk's office. Only by calling the County Clerk's office was it found that each individual must now apply each year for the year's mail-in ballots. It is preferable to do this early in the year. You can call 713-755-6965, and the ballot application will be mailed to you.

Thank you, good neighbor, for this information!

Reminder

● Pick up your dog poop!

● Check your front and back door lights. Part of WFIV's security system is that lights are to be turned on for each home from dusk to dawn.

● No garage or estate sales are allowed in WFIV.

● Put your trash out Tuesday and Friday mornings to keep critters from breaking open your trash bags which makes work for our trash pickup crew. Put your trash can back inside by the end of the day.

Thank you!

Margie Plotkin, thank you for your service to the WFIV community as our 2023 Recreational Area Trustee. We appreciate your contributions to WFIV.

Scott Edwards will complete Margie's term until December 31, 2024. Thank you!

If you lease your WFIV home

With the proliferation of short-term rental agencies (such as AirBnB, VaCasa, VRBO, etc.), new owners and investors have asked about the WFIV leasing policy. The Board filed with Harris County its "Leasing and Short-Term Rental Policy" in December 2021. Following are the main points of WFIV's leasing policy; the full policy can be found on our WFIV website at <https://woodlakeforestiv.com/deed-restrictions/#notice>, Notice of Dedicatory Instrument, Leasing & Short-Term Rental Policy - Jan 2022

Q. For what purposes can I lease my home?

A. Your home can be leased for single family residential purposes only.

Q. Can I lease to someone who wants to operate a business?

A. No.

Q. What lengths of leases are allowed?

A. A lease must be for a term of not less than 180 consecutive days. A "month to month" lease is allowed at the end of the 180 days if the same person(s) who signed the original lease wish to remain

Q. What about leases shorter than 180 consecutive days?

A. Leases shorter than 180 consecutive days are not allowed.

Q. Does the Board have to approve the lease?

A. No, the Board does not have the authority to approve the lease.

Q. Am I required to file the lease with the HOA?

A. No. However, the HOA can demand in writing a copy of the lease if conditions dictate that this is necessary.

Q. How formal does the lease need to be? Can I have a verbal contract?

A. No. All leases must be in writing.

Q. Can I lease a room, rather than the whole house?

A. No. You cannot lease a room or any portion of the entire home, nor can the person leasing from you do so.





Streetwise

A Big Thank You from Parking & Streets

With the last two months full of holidays, visitors, family functions, and parties, we wish to extend to all of you a great big "thank you" for letting us know when additional vehicles would be present at your homes. This kind of communication is what we (Trustee and Committee) strive for so that inconveniences and irritations can be avoided.

Lease (continued)

Q. Are there different rules for persons leasing my home than for me?

A. No. The person(s) leasing are bound to comply with all the WFIV covenants and bylaws. You are responsible for imparting to your lessee the rules and regulations found in these documents.

Q. If I sell my home, is an agreement allowed with the new buyer for me to stay there for some period of time as my moving arrangement are being made?

A. This kind of "leaseback" provision included in a bona fide contract for sale is allowed for not more than 90 consecutive days.

Q. What if any of these policy provisions are not followed?

A. The HOA may, after due legal notice, levy a fine amounting to \$500.00 per day for such violations.

Money Matters

Two areas that prompt most questions from homeowners about the WFIV budget have to do with our Annual Maintenance Fee and our Reserve Fund. These two funds are intertwined as explained below, but are also designed for quite different purposes, as noted below.

Annual Maintenance Fee ("AMF"). The AMF is primarily used for operating expenses that enhance the amenities available to residents of WFIV. While perhaps the most visible results are landscaping, trash pickup, and pool maintenance/upkeep, there are other monthly maintenance expenses that are not so apparent. For example, utilities that support landscaping (water and water meters) and security (Flock Safety cameras and lights) are handled usually with little fanfare but run into tens of thousands of dollars each year. Likewise, curb repairs and subsequent curb painting for house numbers or fire hydrants can run into thousands of dollars. Additionally, WFIV, as part of the Woodlake Forest Community Association ("WFCA"), which takes care of the esplanades up and down Gessner in front of our Doliver and Longmont entrances, contributes thousands of dollars to WFCA for the upkeep and landscaping of those areas. For even further defined maintenance expenses, feel free to contact the HOA Board Treasurer.

Unique and unforeseen events (especially weather conditions) can occur that require extraordinary expenditures not detailed in the annual and monthly budget projections. This is where the Reserve Fund comes in.

Money Matters (continued)

Reserve Fund. Contributions are made to the WFIV Reserve Fund annually. A healthy Reserve Fund is evidence that an HOA can address critical needs for unpredictable occurrences. With Hurricane Harvey, WFIV incurred a number of one-time expenses to repair or replace severely damaged areas of our community: (1) replacing retaining walls in the ravine area south and east of the pool; (2) adding retaining walls along the south side of WFIV where severe erosion occurred; (3) replacing dying trees due to standing water that rotted the roots and lower trunks; and (4) sodding and re-sodding areas along the Bayou after Harris County Flood Control completed the waste-water treatment project. Additionally, and most importantly, immediately after Harvey, WFIV had the means to have security details 24/7 during the weeks when many residents had to leave their homes unattended. WFIV was able to employ these security measures to protect our homes and properties by forestalling malicious activities by criminals looking for vulnerable areas in which to operate.

Another critical event occurred two years ago with the prolonged freeze. Many of our plants, shrubs, and trees were killed, and pipes were broken that wasted water and became non-functional. Because of diligent attention and contributions to our Reserve Fund, WFIV had the means to re-establish the landscaped beauty of which we are so proud.

While the intention is not to have an overly flush Reserve Fund account, guidelines suggest that it be generous enough to meet these kinds of situations.

You will find in every issue of *The Buzz* a financial "Statement of Revenue and Expenses" that tracks the monthly revenues and expenses (including the Reserve Fund) during the year. Additionally, at each monthly Board meeting, a review of these same revenues, expenses, and reserves is made. Any questions can be addressed to the Board Treasurer, Ellen LeBlanc, at wlfivhoatreasurer@gmail.com.

Our Flock Safety System: More Measures for our Security

Flock Safety has become an important tool for neighborhoods, especially as more neighborhoods invest in this technology to create a "web" of sorts that law enforcement agencies can access to help solve crimes. You can drive in either direction on Gessner from WFIV and see a number of Flock Safety signs in our neighboring subdivisions, especially the Memorial Villages, which have had this system in place for several years. Over 80 neighborhoods in Houston have this technology in place, and in October 2023 alone, 128 crimes were solved with these community cameras. [Ref: The Nest Team, FlockSafety.com]

2024 will be the fourth year since the WFIV Board invested in the Flock Safety camera system in a continuing effort to provide safety and security to our WFIV community. Since our entry streets, Doliver and Longmont, are public streets, we do not have the ability to put in access gates, which can be a measure to help deter crime, so other means need to be employed. The cameras that WFIV had in place for many years were no longer a reliable system, nor did it provide the needed information to assist the Houston Police Department ("HPD") in identifying vehicles involved in crimes.

Flock (continued)

As more and more neighborhoods and businesses subscribe to this Flock Safety technology, the alerts that go to law enforcement agencies are almost immediate and enforcement actions can begin without delay.

What is Flock Safety, and why would we want to invest in such a system? The Flock System is a dynamic system that uses license plate reading cameras to provide 24/7 monitoring. The Flock Safety cameras only capture the license plates, make, and model of the vehicle, not the driver. It is an Atlanta-based company and was created to deter and help solve crimes, especially vehicle thefts and burglaries. Being tied into the HPD, for example, allows HPD to access license plates in an area where a crime has been committed, follow through with comparative data in their system, and many times then identify the lawbreaker. Only very specific individuals have access to the data that the Flock Safety operating system collects.

In WFIV's case, our Flock System has proved invaluable in several instances already. We have been tied into the HPD from the beginning, but now also are tied into the Harris County Sheriff's Department. In our own neighborhood, we were able to ensure that a vehicle that seemed to be following one of our residents was simply a vehicle that was in the neighborhood for legitimate reasons. In another instance, we were able to assist HPD in determining that a burglary could not be traced to any vehicles in our neighborhood.



The Gotier Trace in The Early Days of The Republic of Texas

In 1829 an illiterate Scottish immigrant, James Gotcher ("Gotier"), arrived in San Felipe and presented himself to Stephen F. Austin, leader of the Old 300, the original Caucasian settlers in the Mexican state of Tejas. By the age of 27, Austin had decided to help his father Moses by moving 300 families to settle in Texas. During the mid-1820s, when Stephen F. Austin was founding this town, the only roads in the area were wagon ruts of beaten trails marked by notched trees. Within a decade, however, the village of San Felipe, one of the first Anglo settlements in Texas, had become a hub from which 8 or more roads projected.

Having established the San Felipe Trail, which connected with Harrisburg (present day Houston), Austin needed a road to the west to the camp then known as the colony on the Colorado or Bastrop. James Gotcher (Gotier) proceeded to construct this key trail, which traversed wild and uninhabited territory commonly frequented by Caddos and Comanches. The San Felipe Road proper, which ran to Harrisburg, transported goods inland from the Gulf Coast. Even these main thoroughfares, however, were dusty trails in the summer and impassable quagmires in the winter, often flooded by knee-deep water. Not until well into the 20th century did Texas begin to develop her present, outstanding highway system.

Austin awarded Gotcher land on Rabb's Bayou west of Round Top in current day Lee County, and by 1834 Gotcher had his entire family moved into a newly constructed log cabin and adjacent trading post where early settlers could obtain food stuffs, lead musket balls, and other necessities. The James Gotcher family consisted of his sons Samuel, Nathaniel, James Jr., and William Riley. Mrs. Gotcher's name was Mary Nancy. Also with the family, their one daughter Jane, and her husband, Lemuel Crawford.

In the winter of 1836 General Santa Anna was approaching San Antonio de Bexar with his huge and well provisioned army, and David Crockett had summoned "Tennessee Volunteers" to come to the Alamo and join the Republic of Texas Army. Captain William B. Harrison traveled the Gotcher Trace part of the way there and stayed at the trading post for several days before embarking with significant much needed supplies for the Alamo. Gotcher's son-in-law Lemuel Crawford accompanied the men and was of course subsequently killed in action at the Alamo.

One year later, in March of 1837, Comanches attacked the homestead, murdering Gotcher and his two oldest sons, Samuel and Nathaniel, and taking captive the widow Jane Gotcher and her two youngest sons and infant daughter Margaret.

They were subsequently forced to watch a ceremonial dance along the Gotcher Trace involving their mother scalp with its long blond hair intact mounted on a pole.

The Gotcher party was traded to the Choctaws, who resided across the Red River in the Arbuckle Mountains (current southern Oklahoma), and then were freed by a trade with Colonial Coffee and Charles Spaulding, who operated a trading post near current Sherman, TX. Spaulding married Jane, and they resided upon the land on Rabb's Bayou thereafter. Samuel Gotcher's heirs were awarded land which constituted nearly the entirety of current day Austin, TX and the eastern half of the campus of The University of Texas. A descendant of Jane Gotcher Crawford Spaulding stated that a marker should be erected upon her gravesite there stating, "A mother's deathless valor and devotion."

This is just one account of the many brave and fearless early Texans, whose contributions, although vaguely recollected are none the less remarkable and noteworthy indeed.

Contributed by Glenn Andrews



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Ellen LeBlanc

THE BUZZ

Leona Urbish,

Pat Cavanagh

WFCA WFIV

REPRESENTATIVE

Jana Gunter

Woodlake Forest IV Homeowners Association, Inc.				
Maintenance Fund				
Statement of Revenue and Expenses				
As of December 31, 2023				
		2023 Final Budget		Difference
OPERATING REVENUE				
Annual Homeowners Fee	\$ 565,000	\$ 570,000	\$ 5,000	
Annual Homeowners Late Fee	\$ 1,350	\$ 450	\$ (900)	
Annual Homeowners Interest Due	\$ 254	\$ 200	\$ (54)	
Resales Certificates & Transfer Fees	\$ 3,800	\$ 1,500	\$ (2,300)	
Reserve Fund Contributions	\$ 9,900	\$ -	\$ (9,900)	
Other Income (Pool Keys, etc.)	\$ 1,972	\$ -	\$ (1,972)	
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$ 582,276	\$ 572,150	\$ (10,126)	
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Landscaping	\$ 240,980	\$ 269,000	\$ 28,020	
Tree Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Utilities	\$ 56,985	\$ 69,632	\$ 12,647	
Parking & Streets	\$ 1,990	\$ 11,000	\$ 9,010	
Pool & Tennis Court	\$ 15,661	\$ 16,540	\$ 879	
Security & Lights	\$ 8,020	\$ 9,850	\$ 1,830	
Special Projects	\$ 49,500	\$ 49,212	\$ (288)	
Administration	\$ 8,331	\$ 10,572	\$ 2,241	
Professional Services	\$ 29,911	\$ 52,600	\$ 22,689	
Woodlake Forest Community Association	\$ 14,820	\$ 14,820	\$ -	
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 426,197	\$ 503,226	\$ 77,029	
MAINTENANCE FUND ENDING BALANCE HELD @ CHASE BANK				
	\$ 156,079			
Reserve Fund @ Chase Bank as of December 31, 2023				
	\$ 40,802	\$ 40,802	\$ -	
Pool Expenditures	\$ 4,198	\$ 3,500	\$ (698)	
Curb/Expenditures	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Landscaping Enhancements	\$ 4,100	\$ 35,000	\$ 30,900	
Lighting	\$ 3,480	\$ -	\$ (3,480)	
RESERVE FUND @ CHASE	\$ 29,024	\$ 79,302	\$ 26,722	
MAINTENANCE AND RESERVE FUNDS ENDING BALANCE @ CHASE				
	\$ 185,104	\$ 582,528		

Woodlake Forest IV Homeowners Association, Inc. Total Reserve Fund as of December 31, 2023			
JP Morgan Chase (CD)	\$ 40,000		
Cadence Bank (CD)	\$ 232,941		
TBD (CD)	\$ 100,000		
Total Reserve Fund	\$ 372,941		
Maintenance Fees	65%		

For our HOA forms, please go to the Woodlake Forest IV
website at <https://woodlakeforestiv.com>