

FOREST PARKS COMMUNIQUÉ

IT IS OFFICIAL, FALL 2021 IS HERE!

Neighborhood Information

Annual Meeting

Spring brought with it our HOA Annual meeting. This year our meeting was once again in our community at the walking track parking area 6/22/21. This area is convenient, and we don't have to rent an area to host it.

This year we would like to welcome two new members to your board of directors. Our Treasurer is Lisa Eddy and Secretary is Haley Owens. Michael Haley will continue as Vice President and Kim Brown will continue as President.

The meeting started with review of the past year. The HOA hosted a couple of movie nights and we continued with the food trucks until fall. Fall 2020 was a busy time for our neighborhood. First up was the completed sign project, which we will talk about later in this edition. October brought a fun filled Fall Festival and the installation of our community security cameras which are connected with Shelby County Sheriff's office.

Winter was rather slow as we waited on Spring to arrive. Spring was a busy time for our community. We are happy to share the addition of our community library located on Conroy Rd. at Clairmont. We have created an area for the "take a book, leave a book" library. There are two libraries. Our kids have a library and there is a general library for everyone.



Michael Haley called The Birmingham Times and they generously donated 2 former newsstands. The stands were in storage and needed cleaning up. Once cleaned up and painted look new. They now match the neighborhood signs with black paint and white lettering. The libraries are bolted down to a concrete pad so there would not be any chance of them tipping over. We added a concrete bench, rocks gathered, and the area finished off with mulch. We did the work ourselves and only spent \$200 on materials for this fabulous new addition. It seems to be a success as so many people are using this new addition.

At the annual meeting we discussed and voted on new projects for 2021. The entrance sign needs to be painted. We voted on changing the color of the metal. Several color choices were looked at and ultimately a darker Espresso color won the vote. We also discussed adding electrical to the exit side of the entrance so we may add additional landscape lighting on both sides of the road.

Maintenance at the Entrance

Our biggest asset is our front entrance. The beautiful landscaping is seen from Hwy 280 and attracts home buyers from all over. It is no secret that we spend a good deal of money to maintain it. We use professional services to ensure the area remains beautiful. In recent years our services were slipping for the money we pay. When requesting service for items like trimming the trees we receive bids that were rather large as this wasn't covered under maintenance. We felt it was time for a change. We located a company that is saving us money with monthly service \$100 less each month. They are covering more items under service that we had to pay additional for in the past. They are eager to please and have bent over backwards to help. When our spring seasonal plants were installed our landscape company failed to start up the sprinkler system. At that time, we were still in our termination period with the old company and had not started services with the new company. Determined not to pay the old company any additional funds, we called the new company to see if they would take a look. The owner came out and spent an entire Saturday starting up the system and repairing issues. He came by several days after to ensure the sprinklers were watering everything. The contract for our old company ended May 31st and on June 1st our new landscape company took over. Southern Landscape Services is our new company.



Since taking over, they have started working on areas that have been neglected in recent years. They trimmed up the trees that were hanging over roadways (without being asked) and repairing areas they see an issue with. This is the service we expect when hiring a full maintenance crew. They are not just going through the motions and appear to really want the area to look good. We are excited to have this new company and hope they continue servicing us with the care they have started out with.

Management Company

Neighborhood Management has been the management company for our community for many years. For anyone who is not sure what they do, our management company takes care of all of our day to day business, paying bills and producing our financial statements. As you all know this service is not cheap. We have been paying \$1,045 per month, which is \$4.74 per house per month. This does not include other fees we pay them, for example, handling the

compliance drive thru cost an extra \$45 per month plus mileage.

In January they increased our fees to \$1,078 per month, \$4.90 per house per month. We were already getting bids from several local management companies that couldn't touch this price. Feeling frustrated in what we are paying, decided to throw that net out a little further to see what we could come up with.

We located a management company that is a "remote" management company. They provide the day to day business services we need. They don't have an office in Alabama but do have other communities using them in the state. We reached out to those HOA's and they gave them great reviews.

When we received the bid from this management company, they blew Neighborhood Management out of the water. Their bid was \$2.00 per house per month. Trying to give our vendor a shot to keep our business, Michael and I had a meeting with the president of N.M. They told us that the fees they charge us are fair and would not come down on their price. With the savings the new company offered we decided to take the leap. We sent a termination letter to Neighborhood Management and signed the bid with this new management company.

Our new management company is "CSM"



Moving all of our financials over to a new company is not an easy task but we have moved and are still tweaking any issues that come up. Please let us know if you have any issues that we need to help with.

Mailboxes

Let's make October our neighborhood "Paint Your Mailbox" month. We have so many mailboxes that are bringing down the look of our neighborhood. It just takes a \$5 can of black paint and a couple numbers to transform it. We have residents who will spruce up your mailbox if you don't want to do it on your own. You can inquire on the FP 280 facebook page, there are several people who paint mailboxes on the side for a small fee.

Forest Parks Fall Festivals

2020's festival was a blast!

COVID-19 concerns had us change direction on our fall event. I must say, this change may have started a new tradition in Forest Parks. Last year we used a Chili cook-off as the center of our festival. Cooks came out far and wide bringing their "A" game for a fierce competition. Everyone sampled the entries and cast ballots for their favorite. Our 1st Annual Forest Parks Chili Cook-Off champion is Michael Haley!



Michael's Louisiana roots brought a superb Cajun Chili to our cook-off. It was a spicy delicious winner.

Forest Parks 2nd Annual Treasure hunt had everyone out searching for a small pumpkin hidden somewhere in the neighborhood. Our 2020 champion is Bryant Ballenger



The hidden pumpkin was inside the hollow of a tree on the new trail off Park/Cliff Rd.

Next, we had a Halloween Scavenger hunt. We had several teams searching far and wide for a list of spooky items. In the end we had a 3-way tie. As a tie breaker, we sent the 3 out to locate 1 last item and the first to return would be the winner.

Pat Dobbs was the first to return with the item to win the prize.



Our last competition was a Corn Hole tournament. Several teams worked hard for that final winning toss but only one team won it all



Renee Ambrose and Gregg Corban ended the tournament as the Forest Parks 2020 Corn Hole Champions.

It was a great afternoon of food and fun. Neighbors came out near and far to sit a spell and get to know each other. We truly had a wonderful time.

I wanted to send out a special thank you to all the Drake girls. They made homemade cupcakes and brought them out for everyone to enjoy!



2021's festival is here!

October brings our annual Fall Festival. This year we will have our 2nd Annual Chili Cook Off. Let's see if Michael can hang onto that title.

This year instead of having a Treasure hunt and a scavenger hunt we will have 2 pumpkins out there for 2 treasure hunts. One will be a little harder to locate. Check our website starting Oct. 15th for clues to the treasure.

Cornhole was a wonderful team event. Renee and Gregg will have to join forces again to see if they have what it takes to win again in 2021!

We will have the event block party style on Conroy Rd. between Linwood and Clairmont again this year. This allows us to have a TV out for also watching fall football. We will have food and drinks with tons of fun!! Bring a chair and come mingling with your neighbors. We will have some games for the kids to play also.

Neighborhood Events

October 2021

- **Forest Parks 280 Fall Festival October 23, 2021.**
 - Chili Cook Off
 - Cornhole Tournament
 - Cake Walks
- **Boo Buckets out the 1st weekend of October.**
 - 12 buckets out circulating
- **Treasure Hunt begin October 15, 2021**
 - 2 treasure hunts this year
- **Halloween Trick or Treat October 31, 2021**
 - Calling all ghosts and goblins

November 2021

- **Christmas decorating at the entrance November 20-21 (weather permitting)**

December 2021

- **Chelsea Christmas Parade and Santa's neighborhood visit (date not announced yet)**
- **Check out a facebook page called Worldwide Santas Christmas Eve Jingle. Great page to join and communicate with many across the world. On Christmas Eve they go outside and jingle bells for Santa's sleigh ride. Site has gone across so many countries and a fun page all year.**

Be in The Know

Forest Parks offers many ways to keep in touch with the board and the events that are planned. The following are ways to stay informed.

Website: www.forestparks280.com

This is a great way to stay informed on events and information affecting the neighborhood.

Email: board@forestparks280.com

One of the fastest ways to reach the board and express your concerns.

Facebook: **Forest Parks 280**

A private "residents only" group page will give insight into the community and a great way to get to communicate with your neighbors. This is the HOA's best place for communications. We try to keep this page pleasant for everyone.

Twitter: **@280parks**

This is a great way to stay informed. A twitter feed is also visible on the website Events/Social tab.

Forest Parks 280 Safety

Flock Safety Cameras

In our last newsletter, we talked about the possibility of adding the license plate cameras. We provided an email address so you could privately send in your thoughts and had a couple Facebook discussions. There was an overwhelming response in favor of adding them. We researched the cameras further. Flock provided a demo of the software, and all looked good. FP280 has a resident who is a law enforcement officer and a Flock Camera administrator for his agency. He could not say enough great things about the cameras. The board moved forward with the installation of the cameras.

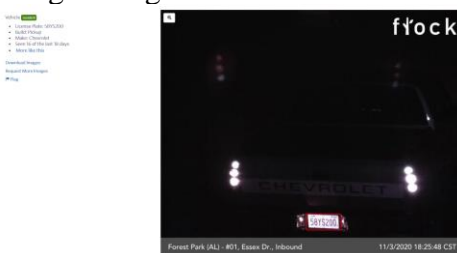


The Shelby County Sheriff's office has signed with Flock and has integrated with their system. Currently, they have access to our cameras.

To give you a look at what the system captures. This is a daytime image



This is a night image of the same truck



The image quality is very clear. The night vision is impressive as the tag image seems to light up. The data is stored for 30 days on the cloud and no data is stored on the camera.

We have a resident "safe list" you may register your vehicles if you wish. <https://admin.flocksafety.com/register/resident/c336c461-df6f-4695-bf38-9a865298c8cd>. If you would like this link emailed to you please email board@forestparks280.com, put "link" in the subject field and we will send the link to you.

The Next Step

The season for increased crime is fast approaching. Another layer of added security is community awareness and involvement. Often, I see posts about suspicious cars in the neighborhood, slow rolling or stopped in the neighborhood. On these instances people do not want to call the police because you just are not sure if there is a problem. Our security consultant offered an option of a community app. There is a free app called "Whatsapp" that can work like a text message. It can be secure, private, and member controlled without recreating new chat strings.

This could be an early warning communication for concerning activities in the neighborhood. This is the idea on how it would work. When someone spots suspicious activity, a message will be sent out. Those available will turn on lights (if dark), open their blinds be seen from a window or even step on your front porch to simply observe and let the suspicious person see that they are being watched by everyone. This is highly effective and shows our community is connected, concerned and safe. There would not be any interaction with the suspicious vehicle/person but just a visual showing, they are being watched.

I thought this sounded like a good option for all of us. If anyone is interested in starting something like this, please email board@forestparks.com letting us know you are interested. The HOA can coordinate this with our resident safety expert and get this going.

I want to stress; this is not a neighborhood watch where people are patrolling the streets.



This is simply acting like nosy neighbors looking at what is going on outside.



Please send in your thoughts on this!

Neighborhood Signs

Our signs and posts have been an eyesore for a while. A couple years ago the board had replacement of the signs approved at the annual meeting. This was on our radar to finish this project this year. We further inspected them and found the posts were still solid. The rust seems to be mainly on the surface. We researched painting vs. replace if it was cost effective. We received estimates and the savings was substantial, so we decided to paint them. Hopefully, we will get several years more life out of them.



The HOA purchased new street name, stop, speed limit and children at play signs. We purchased high quality prismatic signs. The estimated life of the sign should be 10+ years. The rust has been removed with a grinder down to the metal. To match our

mailboxes, the posts have been painted black from the original brown color. The new street name signs are white with black lettering to keep with the white and black theme of the mailboxes.

While we were getting bids for resurfacing and painting, we noticed a resident who was sprucing up his neighbor's mailboxes. When approached with painting the signposts Gregg Corban jumped at the chance to spruce up his neighborhood. He provided a fantastic bid to the HOA to work on this project "for the greater good".



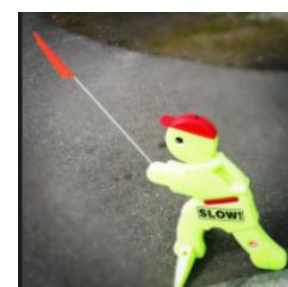
With freshly painted posts we will take this opportunity to maintain them often to keep them looking new and rust free.



Friendly Reminder

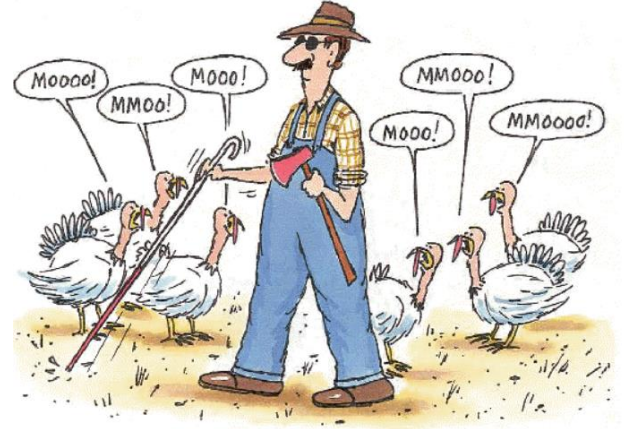
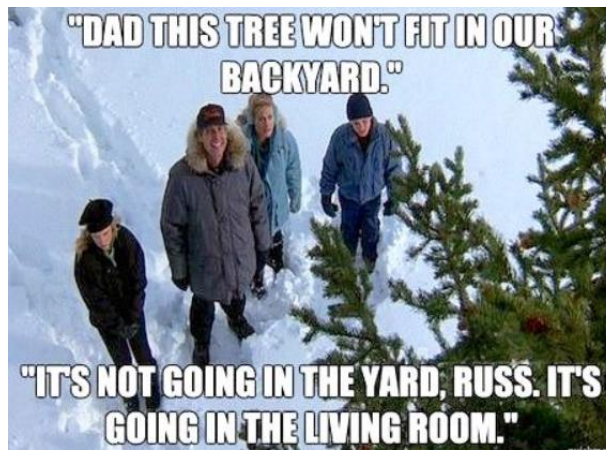
It is a friendly reminder that the signs posted are the rules of the road. They are there for the safety of everyone in the community. Please keep your speeds down and stop at the signs. We are all guilty of an occasional rolling stop.

Fall is upon us, and kids are outside playing. They may not always be on the lookout for cars coming down the road or around corners. Some neighbors even go as far as to post their own signs to SLOW DOWN kids playing.



The safety of our kids and of ourselves should matter to all of us.

FOREST PARKS 280 HOLIDAY FUNNIES



Wildlife Safe Reindeer Food



Perfect project during the Christmas break

Ingredients (makes 6-8 reindeer bags):

- 2 cups oats
- 1 cup mixed seeds or wild birdseed
- 2/3 cup dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup chopped dried apricots
- pinch of magic!

Equipment:

- 6-8 clear disposable piping bags or cone shaped cellophane bags
- 6-8 long brown pipe cleaners
- 12-16 googly eyes
- glue stick
- single hole punch.
- String
- Labels (optional)

Method:

Pour the oats, seeds, 1/2 of the cranberries and all of the apricots into a large bowl. Get the kids to add a pinch of magic from a bowl or the air for extra fun!

Give everything a good stir until it is completely combined.

Divide the remaining cranberries between the bags.

Spoon the reindeer food mixture into the bags on top of the cranberries.

Wrap a pipe cleaner around each bag to tie it closed, then wrap the two loose ends around your finger to curl into antlers

Glue two googly eyes onto each bag.

Print off as many labels as you need, then cut each label down to size and punch a hole in each one.

Tie a label onto each reindeer with string.

Store in a cool dry place until Christmas Eve, when you can sprinkle the reindeer food outside your house to attract Santa's reindeer!

(sample label below)



Pulling the sleigh is such a feat,
Let's reward them with a tasty treat!
Sprinkle outside, all around,
By happy reindeer it will be found!
This reindeer food will bring them flocking,
So Santa will definitely fill your stocking!

