

Ashcroft

September 2022

Welcome to the Fall Newsletter

The feature article is a Q and A with Rick Beyer about the new development planned for the area east of the clubhouse. You will also find information about a new Landscape and Gardening committee, updates from VDOT on the diverging diamond interchange, and notices of other Ashcroft committees and activities.

If you would like to highlight the accomplishments of a resident or family, an upcoming event of wide interest, or offer photographs or suggestions for future editions, please contact AshcroftNewsletter@gmail.com.

Ashcroft Board News

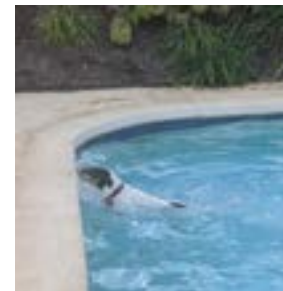
Bob Baumgartner, President

2022 continues to be a busy year for your Board of Directors. Among the highlights are

1. The opening of the pool. This pool season has been very successful. The pool grounds have been improved, the waterfall was repaired, and Kim Martin and her lifeguards have provided a very safe and welcoming environment.
2. ARC guidelines are being revised and rewritten.
3. New listserv guidelines have been adopted.
4. A new budget process is being implemented.
5. The Association insurance coverage is being reviewed and will be rebid.
6. The basketball court has been improved – thank you, Michael Bachman.
7. The Technology Committee is improving the website, including the reservation system for Association amenities.
8. The Trails Committee has been working hard to keep trails accessible as the Phase III development begins.
9. Numerous repairs have been made to the clubhouse.
10. The Board is replacing/repairing the two primary Ashcroft signs on Lego Drive.
11. The Board is still trying to secure bids for a major repair and re-lining of the tennis/pickleball court.

Doggie Day at the Ashcroft Pool

Your four-legged friend's favorite day will be **Saturday, October 1**, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. (Note, the pool will be open to humans until the end of September, but there will be no lifeguard coverage.) All summer, your dog had to stay home alone, while you and your family enjoyed the pool. Finally, the pool will be all for your dog! Come and join the tail-wagging fun.



Octoberfest is coming
Watch for more information!

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What's Ahead? Q & A With Rick Beyer About the New Development

Because of keen interest in the new development being planned by Rick Beyer for the area east of the clubhouse, below is a Q & A with Rick, who provides an update on what's happening.

Q: What is the status of the new development?

A: The engineering for the area is completed, and permits have been issued. We have weekly meetings with the county inspector who has been assigned to the project to be sure we are following procedures outlined in our approved plans -- plus any regulations that are not specifically described in the plans. He has been very helpful with this process. Because there are so many rules, it is easy to break one without realizing you are doing it.

Q: What is the status of creating a road into the new area?

A: We are approximately two-thirds of the way to the end of the road with our tree-clearing crew. We have been held up considerably due to bad weather. We could actually work through the mud, but almost certainly some of the mud would have ended up on our roads, so we have kept the equipment sitting still when it is muddy.

Q: What is the name of the new area?

A: There will be no specific name for the new area. The technical name is Phase III Ashcroft. There will be several sections as I develop lots. I will most likely be platting and approving groups of eight-to-ten lots periodically; those groups will have a section number attached to them. I had several road names set aside 25 years ago, but in the years since, the county has changed its policy. County planners now say that my preferred names have been used elsewhere on other new county roads. So I will be developing new names that do not conflict with other county road names to avoid confusion with first responders.

Q: What is the status of walking trails during construction?

A: We are attempting to keep trails available, though several are clearly going to be blocked by construction temporarily -- and some permanently. Once the roads are laid and it is easy to walk the lots, I will decide where trails can be re-aligned. In the meantime, I would suggest that residents begin to use the trails that parallel Summit Ridge trail. There are several thousand feet of trails there that some residents use.

While construction is ongoing, please keep in mind that it can be dangerous. A particular concern is with sediment traps and ponds. The sediment that gathers in them is very fine; with the right combination of water, the sediment can become like quicksand. For that reason, we surround such areas with safety fencing, and ask residents to respect the fencing. Residents also should not allow their dogs to go under the fence or get tangled in it. To promote safety, it is best for residents and dogs to use other trails and to avoid the construction area.

Q: When will construction of the first houses begin?

A: I anticipate the first houses will be started next summer but, at this point, I am uncertain what the style or size of the houses will be. When I am able to walk the lots to determine what houses will fit well, I will make those decisions. Key determining factors in each lot will be learning what space will be available after finalizing plans for a driveway and a septic area. The remaining area within each lot must be 25 percent or less in grade to be legal to be built upon. So I will also take into account the slope of land in each lot and whether there is potential for a view.

These lots will be the same size as lots have been from the beginning of Ashcroft. The approvals of all lots came at the same time, in the late 1970s, and all lots are designed by the same set of standards. Some lots may end up being a little larger because the terrain is more difficult; lots may need to be larger to accommodate the driveway, house and septic in an area that is 25 percent or less of slope.

Q: How many houses do you anticipate being built?

A: The approval is for a total of 75 lots although I doubt I will be able to make that many work due to slopes and ground conditions.

Q: Will you be the exclusive builder? Or do you anticipate having other builders?

A: Right now I anticipate that I will be building in there myself, although that is likely to change because our workload is very heavy. If I bring in other builders, it will require planning since I have not dealt with that scenario for over 35 years. As this coming year unfolds, I will make decisions about house-building plans. Right now I am mostly concerned with bringing the road online.

Q: Given the number of new residents the development will bring to Ashcroft, are there plans to create additional recreational facilities?

A: There is an account within the Ashcroft Neighborhood Association designed to accumulate funds for future expansion of facilities. That account is funded by \$2,000 from every sale. The funds go into a separate account under the direction of the Ashcroft Board, which will decide what will be built and when. As developer, I have committed to building one more tennis court. The decision about where to build the court will be made after it is determined what land will be available for it.

Q: Given the number of construction vehicles associated with developing the area, what are your plans for promoting awareness among drivers of the speed limit on Lego?

A: The traffic/speeding situation on lower Lego is something that is beyond my ability to do anything about. All I can do, which is what I already have done, is caution my workers and subcontractors to obey the established speed limit. Residents along lower Lego tell me that the speeding is not with my workers, but rather with Ashcroft residents who forget they are going past houses of other residents. The road is wide and level enough that it encourages drivers to exceed the limit. The control of lower Lego rests with VDOT. The Ashcroft Board has been active in trying to impress upon VDOT the need for greater speed enforcement and/or creation of an additional speed hump on Lego. Establishing a pedestrian path along lower Lego would also be a solution that would benefit residents, but the ability to do that is greatly compromised because of rules established by VDOT.

DDI Project: Major Milestones Ahead

As the newsletter is being prepared in early September, VDOT and the contractor working on the Diverging Diamond Interchange project provided general timeframes about upcoming milestones. The dates given below are approximate and dependent on weather conditions.

Motorists' ability to turn left from Hansens Mountain Road is expected to end on Monday, September 12. Eliminating the left turn was necessary, VDOT and the contractor said, to give workers an opportunity to construct a concrete "porkchop" median island at the Hansens Mountain Road/Rt. 250 intersection as well as a concrete raised median strip on Rt. 250.

Although the ability to turn left from Hansens Mountain Road onto Rt. 250 will end then, motorists' ability to turn left onto Hansens Mountain Road from Rt. 250 eastbound will remain.

The traffic pattern change into the DDI configuration is currently scheduled for the week of October 10th.

Permanent surface pavement and line markings are scheduled to be completed by November 23rd.

The project's closeout and final punch-list work is scheduled to be completed by the end of January, 2023.

For a description and diagram of the DDI, access

<https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/resources/Culpeper/AlbDB/111814PlanRoll.pdf>

The DDI contractor thanks Ashcroft residents for our patience during the project's construction.

Committee Updates

About to Sprout: Landscaping and Gardening

A Landscaping and Gardening Committee is being formed. Its goals include providing information to the community on deer-resistant native and non-native plantings; types of planting and maintaining your landscaping; and how to identify and control invasive species found in Ashcroft such as Japanese stiltgrass, tree-of-heaven, garlic mustard plants, and oriental bittersweet.

More information to come.

ARC

The Architectural Review Committee would like to remind everyone that it is the homeowners' responsibility to maintain their yard in good condition to help preserve our collective property values, ensure drainage system work as designed, and provide a pleasing look to our neighborhood. Specifically, our existing guidelines state:

1.19.5 Trees, shrubs and planting beds are to be maintained in accordance within industry standards. Hence, planting beds, shrubs and trees are to be pruned to prevent overgrowth and promote an aesthetically appealing look.

1.19.6 Property owners are to maintain their entire property, **including ditch lines and areas adjacent to the street**. Although these areas may be in an easement area of the Virginia Department of Transportation, **it is the responsibility of all property owners to maintain this area by affecting all of the above requirements in the ditch drainage lines and areas adjacent to the street**, including mowing, leaf removal and clearing out of debris in drainage ditches.

Please direct any questions about these guidelines to ARC chair Bill Snow at snowmann3000@gmail.com

Pool

Thanks to Kim Martin and H2O Works for a fantastic pool season! Residents have shared that the pool was sparkly clean, tidy, and closely monitored this year. The Pool Committee will continue to work closely with the Board and Kim Martin to enhance the Ashcroft pool experience. Please contact Denise Bachman at dedleuva@gmail.com if you have ideas or would like to join the Pool Committee.

Denise Bachman

Traffic

The Traffic Committee is continuing its efforts to curtail the ongoing speeding problem on Lego Drive. It is working with VDOT and Albemarle County Police in this effort. At the committee's request, the police installed a speed meter for a few weeks and continues to monitor the area for speeders. In addition, VDOT is investigating the possibility of installing a third speed bump on lower Lego.

The committee has also received assurances from the Albemarle County Fire Chief that opening the gates between North Pantops Drive and Westminster Canterbury in an emergency is part of fire department protocol.

Lotta Löfgren

ANTS & Fams

"That's a male Hercules Beetle," one of our Ashcroft



Child Naturalists said, lifting it up to show about 20 neighbors participating in the first AWE (Ashcroft Wilderness Experience) summer event. Found by the pond on the June 18th Kid-Naturalist-

Led Trail Walk, the Hercules Beetle can easily carry food up to 850 times its body weight. Fortunately, its diet primarily consists of rotting fruit.

Following their hike down the Yellow Trail, participants spanning nearly five generations gathered for a Nature Happy Hour and awards ceremony at the Yellow Trail Observation Deck (aka The Croans). While there, they recognized the Ashcroft Junior Naturalists (participating children) who led the tour for their parents, grandparents, and neighbors.

The event was the first to be produced by the new Ashcroft Nature, Trails & Family Events Committee (ANTS & Fams). If interested in helping design and/or host future events, contact Adam Croan at (707) 327-6789.

Adam Croan

Technology

During the past quarter, a lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to improve the user experience on the Ashcroft website. Tasks that have been completed include:

1. Formulating and posting an online form to register new users of the listserv. (Please see ashcroftneighbor.com/listserv-signup/)
2. Purging the website of out-of-date news posts and articles.
3. Developing and launching a reservations form for using the swimming pool for parties.

Our webmaster, Val Ruland-Schwartz, has also been researching storage options for the Ashcroft HOA documents that are currently stored only in paper form. These forms to be digitized include changes to the Declarations-CC&Rs, Board of Directors Agendas and Meeting Minutes, Architectural Review Committee requests and property plats.

One other near-term project will be to establish a calendar of upcoming events that will include Board meetings, special meetings and neighborhood-wide events.

If you have ideas about suggested improvements to the website, please let the committee know by sending your ideas to millertanaboard@gmail.com

Playground

Sharp-eyed visitors to the clubhouse area may have noticed new additions to the Ashcroft playground this spring and summer. A new climbing bridge and toadstools have added variety in addition to the swings, slides, castle and tunnel. The refresh has also included the addition of steps from the playground, as well as new Adirondack chairs for folks to enjoy while watching children play.

But we're not done yet! Work on creating a climbing wall next to the big swing set is underway, and will be completed soon. Big thanks go out to Rick Beyer and his workers for installing the toadstools, bridge and safe landing zone, along with building the climbing wall. Thanks also go to committee members Elizabeth Darby, Jessica Little, Shannon Spaeder and last year's board member Heather Elliott, who developed the plan for playground additions.

Jonathan Gardner

Trails

The Trails Committee spent time this summer building a detour to the upper Red Trail entry to help minimize the risk of contact between trail users and the heavy equipment clearing trees from the roadway for the Phase III development. Over two separate weekends, in summer's rising heat, we created about 800 feet of new trail. The work involved clearing debris on the forest floor, clearing brush and undergrowth, moving downed limbs, tree trunks and rocks and cutting saplings.

Thanks go out to committee members/volunteers Randy Huffman, Lee Shapiro, Jeff Taylor and Tom Wolanski for their work over the two weekends. The trails have also seen their share of fallen limbs and trees during the summer storms. These get cleared not just by Rick Beyer and his workers, but also by countless trail users, either as special projects or while on their daily outings. I want to especially call out the work of Peter Emsch, who rather ambitiously spent hours clearing a large, multi-tree blockage on the Yellow Trail earlier this summer.

Jonathan Gardner



More photos on page 6



Webmaster Valerie Ruland-Schwartz sends out a special request for photos to enhance the beauty and appeal of the Ashcroft website:

“We want to showcase all the wonderful things about Ashcroft, such as the scenic trails, beautiful architecture and useful amenities. Are you an aspiring photographer? Or just have some nice snapshots of our neighborhood? If so, please send your pictures so we can use them on our website! We’ll be sure to credit you as photographer,” Val said.

Photos can be sent to Val at val@blixcreative.com