

# Arbor Hills Newsletter

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## March 2019

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### Calendar of Events

- March 14, 2019**      **Open Board Meeting.** *All residents welcome!* Join us from 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Logan Elementary School, 2685 Traver Road, Ann Arbor (located on the north side of Traver Blvd. and west of Nixon Road.) Please note: This location is different from where we typically meet. Clague Middle School was not available for this meeting.)
- April 16, 2019**      **Board of Directors Meeting,** 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (Location TBD)

### Questions or Concerns? Who Ya Gonna Call?

If you have questions or concerns, please *contact our new property manager, Alex Stankiewicz, at Casa Bella Property Management* at [248-655-1500, ext. 1010](tel:248-655-1500) or [alex@casabellamanagement.com](mailto:alex@casabellamanagement.com) between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Alex is responsible for fielding questions about policies; governing documents; residents' dues and accounts; and various other matters related to our neighborhood. He also distributes our newsletter and announcements, so if you need to change your email address, please let him know. Alex serves as the first point of contact if you need help and works closely with the Arbor Hills Board to resolve unusual or difficult issues.

*If you identify a safety issue that affects our residents, please contact the Arbor Hills Board of Directors at: [Board@ArborHills.com](mailto:Board@ArborHills.com). If you observe a fire or suspected criminal activity, immediately call police at 911.*

### Arbor Hills Official Website

We recognize Arbor Hills residents have established Facebook and Google Group accounts for those who wish to informally participate in sharing information about our neighborhood. *Please be advised, however, that the official and exclusive source of approved information for Arbor Hills residents is the Arbor Hills website: [www.arbor-hills.org](http://www.arbor-hills.org).* It is the responsibility of each of our residents to read information posted on the Arbor Hills website, with special attention given to association dues, bylaws and policies.

Visit our official website to learn about our upcoming events, history, annual budget, bylaws, policies, newsletters, meeting minutes, and various announcements. Various forms are also available on the website.

### Before you Start Your Next Home Improvement Project ...

One form you will find on the Arbor Hills website is the *“Request for Modification” approval form*. This form must be completed and submitted to Casa Bella Property Management, in advance, if you wish to make a change from established color standards (e.g., roof shingles, front doors, siding, etc.); garage door or window pane design (e.g. muntin/grid versus plain glass); or outdoor structural components (retaining walls, decks, fences, etc.). This is necessary to ensure Arbor Hills maintains a consistent appearance to enhance property values.

It is also the *responsibility of homeowners to ensure appropriate building permits are obtained* (either by themselves or hired contractors) prior to initiating electrical, mechanical, heating and cooling, plumbing, and/or renovation or construction projects. This also applies to roofing, window replacement, deck replacement/construction, fence construction, basement refinishing, and other home improvement or large landscaping projects. For your own protection, verify contractors are properly licensed and insured to do the work. And, don't forget you are legally required to contact “MISS DIG” to identify/flag underground utilities

before you or your contractors begin any excavation project (e.g., planting shrubs and trees)!

## **Please Stash Your Trash**

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Just a reminder that we must abide by a City Ordinance and Arbor Hills bylaws regarding proper use and indoor storage of trash, recycling and compost bins. Bins that are stored outside are an eyesore and reduce the aesthetic appearance of our neighborhood. And, we don't want to inadvertently invite unwelcome critters and pests to "visit" our neighborhood! Bins should be placed at the curb after 6:00 p.m. the night before scheduled trash pick-up (which typically occurs on Wednesday mornings). ***Bins must be removed from the curb within 12 hours after trash pick-up and stored inside your garage.*** Failure to comply with the City Ordinance and Arbor Hills bylaws could result in fines. We don't want this to happen. Please clear a spot in your garage to store your trash and recycling bins. Thank you!

## **For Safety's Sake, Please Clear Snow and Ice!**

Winter blustered into Ann Arbor a few weeks ago and, since then, it's been an ongoing challenge to maintain clear walkways for the safety of our residents who are on the move. Our children, dog walkers, and other neighbors appreciate your efforts to maintain and clear your sidewalks and driveway! ***What are the rules for snow and ice removal in Arbor Hills?*** Homeowners (or renters) are responsible for clearing snow accumulation of one (1) inch or more within 24 hours. In addition, ice must be removed and icy areas must be treated with sand or a salt-free substance designed to melt ice (e.g. "Safe Step" ice melting granules). To protect our sensitive wetland and wildlife areas, it is not permissible to use salt on your driveway or sidewalks (per Ann Arbor City Code, Chapter 49).

***If you neglect to clear your sidewalk and driveway in a timely manner, we may have to hire a contractor to remove snow and/or ice at your property at your expense. You may also be subject to fines.*** Sidewalks are inspected on a regular basis. Written notices are sent to violators. Your cooperation with maintaining snow and ice-free walkways in our neighborhood is greatly appreciated!

## **Clear the Way for our Snow Plowing Company.**

We have contracted Budd's Lawn Care & Landscaping to plow our streets. Budd's generally arrives within two (2) hours of each two (2) inch accumulation of snow. It may take Budd's longer than usual to clear our streets when the weather is really severe, so please be patient. Please keep an eye on weather reports for anticipated snowfall that may exceed two (2) inches or more. ***It's your responsibility to make sure your vehicles are removed from our streets to accommodate Budd's. Failure to comply with this request may result in your vehicle being towed. You will be charged for towing and related charges.*** It is also your responsibility to ensure guests or service personnel who visit your home are advised about our towing policy. Several years ago, the Board felt it was necessary to establish this towing policy because there were numerous complaints and accidents. And remember: Homeowners/renters are responsible for clearing their own sidewalks and driveways, not Budd's.

***In addition to snow removal, Budd's Lawn Care & Landscaping also has been retained to salt our street intersections when needed.*** (Regular "full-street" salting is not possible because of our sensitive wetlands and conservation easements.) We need your help! Budd's is not always aware of slippery, icy conditions. If you have concerns about street plowing or identify issues related to icy conditions in our intersections, please notify Alex Stankiewicz, Casa Bella Property Management. In addition, please copy the Arbor Hills Board at: [board@arbor-hills.org](mailto:board@arbor-hills.org).

## **Where Should Snow Go?**

If you use a snow blower or contract a snow removal company to clear your driveway and sidewalks, please don't blow the snow into unplowed or plowed streets. ***Cleared snow from your sidewalks and driveway must go into your yard.*** It has recently been brought to the Board's attention that Budd's plow crew deposited piles of snow on a few of our sidewalks. In rare cases, they also left snow at the ends of some residents' driveways. We have been in touch with Budd's and been assured that steps will be taken to prevent these problems in the future.

## **Slow Down to Protect our Residents, Pets and Common Areas!**

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About two (2) weeks ago, a vehicle crashed into and destroyed one of our front entrance floodlights. Fortunately, no one was injured. An adjacent juniper bush was heavily damaged and probably won't survive into spring. Thanks to our innovative neighbor, Steve Hadrill, the floodlight has been replaced. We don't know who was behind the wheel of the vehicle that caused this damage, but it's pretty clear he/she was driving too fast for weather conditions. ***Numerous complaints have been filed about speeding through our neighborhood***, particularly up and down Kilburn Park Circle. During slippery winter days, it's particularly important to slow down when leaving or entering our neighborhood. The maximum speed limit in Arbor Hills is 15 miles per hour, but, for the safety of our children and other residents, please drop your speed to a more considerate and safe speed. And, don't forget to come to a full stop at stop signs. What's your hurry?

## **Fire Hydrants and Snow**

***If you have a fire hydrant in your yard, please shovel the snow from around it during deep snowfalls.*** Fire hydrants can freeze over when snow piles up, rendering them useless. You never know when your hydrant might need to be found and used. All fire hydrants have been marked with flags for ease of location.

## **Street Lights**

A portion of our homeowners' association fees cover repair/replacement costs for street lights that have burned out in our neighborhood. Therefore, the Board has adopted a policy to repair/replace burned out street lights if one (1) light has been out for four (4) months or if three (3) or more lights are out, irrespective of duration. ***If you spot a street light that has burned out or is cycling on and off (sort of blinking on and off), please email Alex at Casa Bella.*** Please specify the location of the street light pole and the cross streets located near the pole.

The Board has been working diligently to obtain rate adjustments from DTE for LED lights installed in Arbor Hills over a year ago. Paperwork, with all documentation requested by DTE, was submitted to DTE last fall. Casa Bella recently contacted DTE again to obtain a status report on our rate adjustment. We are still waiting, and pushing for, a definitive response from DTE.

## **Good News!**

Last winter, an abandoned house in our neighborhood sustained severe water damage when pipes froze and burst. ***On February 28, we learned the property was purchased at Sheriff's auction by two (2) investors.*** Many thanks to Board Member, Thomas Edwards, for diligently working to protect our residents' interests and property values by working through appropriate legal channels to research and track the City's progress on this "compromised" property. Thanks, too, to a nearby neighbor who helped maintain the appearance of the property by pitching in to mow the grass last summer!

## **2019 Homeowners' Association Fees**

Association fees are due from each Arbor Hills household every six (6) months -- by January 1 and July 1. Payment coupons are mailed by Casa Bella in early December (for fees due by January 1), and in early June (for fees due by July 1). ***Fees which were due by January 1, 2019 (in the amount of \$365.00 per household), which have not been paid, are now "overdue" (in arrears).*** Residents who have not paid their homeowners' association fees within a 30-day grace period following the due date, will begin to incur an additional \$25 ***per month*** late/penalty fee until all outstanding fees are paid in full. These late fees can add up quickly! Casa Bella recently sent letters to several residents who are late in paying their association fees. Unfortunately, some residents have been advised their accounts may be referred to a collections agent. We hate this, but have a duty to collect homeowners' association fees to cover budgeted expenses to maintain Arbor Hills! Please ensure you immediately pay your association dues upon receipt of the payment coupon you receive in the mail from Casa Bella.

**2019 Homeowners' Association Fees (continued)**

***You may pay your association fees by check (made payable to Arbor Hills Homeowners' Association) or online.*** To pay online, go to [casabellamanagement.com](http://casabellamanagement.com) and register for access to the website. You will not gain immediate access to the website. First, Casa Bella must approve your registration request. If you wish to pay by check, you may mail a check in the envelope provided with the Casa Bella payment coupon, or you can mail a check to Casa Bella's main office at the following address. Be sure to include your name and street address with your check.

Arbor Hills Condominium Association  
c/o Casa Bella Property Management, Inc.  
850 North Crooks Road – Suite 100  
Clawson, MI 48017

**Contacts**

**Property Management Company:**

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Community Association Manager  
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**Board:** [board@arbor-hills.org](mailto:board@arbor-hills.org)

Arbor Hills Website: [www.arbor-hills.org](http://www.arbor-hills.org)  
Dennis Stom -- President  
David Wang --Vice President  
Thomas Edwards -- Secretary  
Steve Hadrill --Treasurer  
Sherri Fountain -- Member at Large

We welcome your suggestions for improving our neighborhood and enhancing our property values! Let us hear from you and please join us at our Open Board Meeting at Logan Elementary School on Thursday, March 14, 2019 to share your ideas!

