

# BRIARWOOD

Council Bluffs IA

## Homes Association Incorporated

# NEWSLETTER



Spring/Summer

Volume 006

June 2018

### WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS

A warm welcome is extended to new residents. If you have not received a copy of the Briarwood Homes Association Covenants please contact a Board member to get your copy. You may also obtain a copy of the Covenants at [www.BriarwoodCB.org](http://www.BriarwoodCB.org)

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#### **Calling All Candidates!**

Would you like to be a part of the Briarwood Homes Association Board of Directors? As with all groups, new members and ideas improve the effort and benefit everybody. The Board is currently accepting nominations for two expiring positions. The positions will be filled at the October 16, 2018 Annual Member Meeting election. If interested, here is what you need to know. The Board is comprised of 8 members. Responsibilities include keeping the Association financially sound, overseeing Association business affairs, and charting the Associations future. Board positions must be filled by owners and have three (3) year staggered terms.

(See "Candidates" Page 4)



#### **Hydrant Party Anyone?**

Enjoy a summer cool-off at a hydrant party on Berwick Circle, Thursday, July 19 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. courtesy of the Council Bluffs Fire Department and the Council Bluffs Water Works.

#### **Owner Property Maintenance**

Homes and properties are a big investment and responsibility; both in terms of dollars and time. Besides providing residency and basic shelter, they are a source of pride and satisfaction. They serve as the family "hub" and require a significant amount of maintenance and care. As you know, guidelines for this care and maintenance is included in the Briarwood Covenants.

(See "Property Maintenance" Page 5)

May 31, 2018 Finance ReportBeginning 1/1/18 – Ending 5/31/18Receipts

Annual Dues Income *	\$18,600
Miscellaneous Income**	\$ 345
Total Income	\$18,945

Expenses

Insurance Expense	\$ 1,043
Maintenance & Repairs Expense	\$ 755
Utilities Expense	\$ 117
Administrative Expense	\$ 50
PayPal Fee Expense	\$ 181
Total Expense	\$ 2,145

Financial Accounting

Beginning Cash Reserves from 2017	\$ 6,224
Plus Total Receipts for 2018	\$18,945
Less Total Expenses for 2018	\$ 2,145
Less Estimated Remaining 2018 Expense***	\$18,635

**Estimated 2018 Ending Cash Reserve \$ 4,389**

\* **Note 1** – Three (3) homeowners have NOT paid 2018 dues

\*\* **Note 2** – Late dues payment penalties

\*\*\***Note 3** – Projected Accounts Payable/Estimated Remaining 2018 Expense includes upcoming large repairs to both Association detention ponds

A big **“thank you”** to all homeowners who paid their 2018 dues on time. It is very much appreciated. By far, you are the majority, and that saves a significant amount of time and expense for your Association. The Board thanks you!

**Electronic Media Usage**

By Delores DuBois

The Architectural Committee has been busy collecting email addresses by going door to door to help reduce our cost of mailing Newsletters and Dues Invoices. It costs approximately two dollars per household for every mailing. The email addresses will not be shared and will be used only by the Briarwood Association Board. The committee will attempt to reach all households for which we presently do not have email addresses. To help out **“Please Sign Up”** on our website; otherwise your Newsletters/Dues Invoices will continue to be mailed via USPS. Visit our website ([www.BriarwoodCB.Org](http://www.BriarwoodCB.Org)) or Facebook account ([Briarwood Neighbor Chia](https://www.facebook.com/BriarwoodNeighborChia)). The website has a lot of useful information including Board member contacts, Covenants, Newsletters, Financial Reports, Board Meeting Minutes, Pay Pal procedures, list of owner recommended contractors, and more. Website ideas & suggestions can be sent to [Tom@BluffsOnline.com](mailto:Tom@BluffsOnline.com).

**The Presidents Corner**

By Jack Weide

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Association President’s job is getting to meet and know other Association owners. What I have found is that even though we each seem to have our own special interests, which make us unique, we also have much in common. After all, we all belong to the same small, close knit community. We all want to be associated with a premier, sought after community that folks are proud to call home and want to raise their families. I feel Briarwood is such a community! Did you know, experts forecast a 4.1% increase in real estate values for our area in the next year?

Your Board appreciates owner response to the increase in Association dues this year. The response has been positive and supportive. Take a look at Board Member George Sawtelle’s article on page 3. It provides detail on how the extra dues are being utilized. Your Board is making every effort to control Association expenses. For example, efforts are still underway to reduce mailing expense. See Delores DuBois’ article on this page for more details. If you are not already on the Briarwood email list and have not already been contacted, expect a contact soon. You probably noticed each Newsletter focuses on one or two current event topics. In this edition, the focus is on 2019 Board member recruiting, and owner property maintenance. Most HOA’s are driven by “the 3 Ps”; parking, people, and pets. It is no secret that Americans love their pets. Estimates indicate that more than 43 million dogs and 36 million cats live in U.S. households. Pet owners need to be respectful of their neighbor’s property, properly clean up and dispose of their pets waste. (*See Covenant Section 9.3 – Animals, for additional information*) **Finally, we hope to see everyone at the Annual Association Business Meeting Tuesday, October 16.**

**HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!**

**Preferred Business Contacts on Our Website**

Do you own a business or have a good reliable contractor you have used and are willing to share the name and contact information? Please send their name, type of service, phone number and if they have a website, their website name and we will put it under Recommended Home Services Tab on our website. Send to [Tom@BluffsOnline.com](mailto:Tom@BluffsOnline.com)

*Please comply with your Association Covenants*



## Detention Pond Repair Status

By George Sawtelle

Efforts to repair and stabilize the two Association water detention pond structures continue. You will recall that Briarwood owners attending the October 17, 2017 Annual Owner Meeting voted to approve pond reconstruction work preliminarily estimated at around fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000). This action was taken to address major concerns with the deteriorating sixteen (16) year old government-mandated structures. With owners approving a 2018 fifty dollar (\$50) dues special assessment and financing in place, your Board immediately began the search for a reliable contractor to perform the work. It was hoped that construction repair work could commence in the spring of 2018. Board member George Sawtelle developed a comprehensive set of project specifications. Construction Request for Bid (RFB) was sent to three (3) local construction firms; one of which had provided the original \$15,000 project estimate in third quarter 2017. To date only one contractor has responded and expressed tangible interest in taking on the project. The good news is that, in the mean-time, several other planned repair projects have been initiated and completed. The information below provides more project status detail. In summary, your Board is attempting to move the project aggressively forward, however, our efforts are being countered by lack of construction firm responsiveness.



Figure #1 - North Slope Mulberry Tree

### North Detention Pond

The large mulberry tree along the north fence was pruned in April and accumulated branches were removed. (Figure #1) Fill dirt has been added behind retaining walls and reseeded grass is growing. The North Slope was reseeded and grass is growing though; additional over seeding will be needed in the fall.

Where the Aster Circle storm drain discharges into the North Pond, the rock filled wire baskets installed years ago have failed. (Figure #2) There is standing water due to an erosion-generated pool. In addition, some soil and rock has accumulated near the pond outlet.



Figure #2 - Aster Circle Discharge to North Pond

### South Detention Pond

The South Pond continues to have a standing water erosion pool, which may need to be filled at extra cost after each rain to prevent moss and insect larvae developing until a more permanent fix is effected. The South Pond construction Request for Bid (RFB) which was distributed to three (3) potential contractors in January 2018 has received virtually no response. Verbal promises of intention have been received, however, no written commitment responses have been received. Even contractors who have been doing Association construction work for the past several years have failed to respond. At the end of April 2018, a second round of Request for Bid (RFB) was mailed out to three (3) additional/different construction firms. As of the end of May 2018, only one of these firms has responded and committed to provide a bid. As of this Newsletter publication, no firm project bids have been received. With most owner "dues special assessments" now collected, funds are in place to complete the construction work. The Financial Report on page 2 of the Newsletter reflects the current funds on hand. Now the dependency is finding a reliable contractor to perform the work. Input concerning this project can be provided to Board Member George Sawtelle.

**Please**  
Help keep trash & debris out of Retention Pond areas

**Calling All Candidates**

(Continued from Page 1)

Board members, though not compensated for their services, have a fiduciary duty under the law to perform Board duties in good faith and in the best interest of the Association. Director liability insurance is provided by the Association. The Board meets 3-4 times a year, as needed. Much of the Boards business is conducted electronically via telephone, email, texting, etc. Want to learn more? Go to [www.BriarwoodCB.org](http://www.BriarwoodCB.org); Declaration of Covenants, Article 3. We challenge you to give some thought to serving on your Association Board. For specific questions, or to express interest in a nomination, please contact any current Board member.

**HOA Why?**

By Laurie LeMaster

Your Briarwood Architectural Committee appreciates the hard work and dedication that our homeowners provide to make and keep their homes and our neighborhood beautiful. Why submit change requests to your Association Architectural Committee? Ask yourself this question. Do you want to live next to a bright purple house with a red door? No, probably not. Most would not. Your Briarwood Architectural Committee can help prevent this from happening. Here’s a few reasons why you should submit requests to the Association for approval. Everyone’s property values are protected when standards of the neighborhood are followed. Design plans ensure the scale and style meet the standards set forth by Briarwood Covenants. Most requests are approved with little or no modification, so your design expression can remain in tact. What types of changes require Association approval? Decks, sheds, house color, siding changes, patios, major landscaping additions or changes, home additions, fencing. If in doubt as to whether a project needs approval, simply contact a Board Member.

**Recycle/Trash Container Management**

Covenant Section 9.8 Trash and Garbage, provides guidelines for the handling of trash receptacles. Generally, the guidelines promote low visibility and sanitary use. Specifically, to be in compliance, no garbage or trash shall be kept, maintained or contained on any lot so as to be visible from another lot. Further, all equipment and containers for the storage or other disposal of such material shall be kept in clean and sanitary condition. Incinerators are not allowed. On “pick-up” days, it is important to keep receptacles securely covered to prevent spillage or wind blown debris. Be a good neighbor, comply with your Association Covenants.

**2018 Mowing / Landscaping Contract** By Tom Quigley

During January 2018, the Board sent out Bid Requests to 8 local companies for mowing and fertilizing the Pond Areas. Pinnacle Lawn Service was selected with the lowest cost while fulfilling all our requirements. Special notice was highlighted of the areas in both ponds where the grass was scalped before. They will take care in those areas to prevent that from happening in the future. They also agreed to no use of Roundup. That is what caused erosion along pond walls. That is being addressed to re-grow grass there.

**On-Going Detention Pond Oversight**

*(In this article , Board member George Sawtelle shares his observations and thoughts about pond care and oversight. If you are interested in learning more or in taking a guided walking tour of the pond sites contact George at [Husker.george@gmail.com](mailto:Husker.george@gmail.com).)*

The Association strives to provide excellent maintenance of it’s two water detention ponds making them as functional and attractive as possible. Care and upkeep is a constant effort. The article “Detention Pond Repair Status” on Page 3 provides important information on the current status of major structural reconstruction work that will be done this year. This article explains many of the day-to-day, more routine, maintenance tasks. For example, mowing and fertilization that are contracted out by the Association. (See article above) Also, other routine care and upkeep functions that are performed either by Board members or adjacent home owners. For those who do not live around the Detention Ponds or are otherwise unfamiliar with them, you may not realize the amount of care the ponds require. They were designed to handle 100% of the Briarwood Sub-division surface water run-off. They have performed this task well for nearly sixteen (16) years now.

(Continued on Page 5)



Figure 3 – South Pond standing water / weed bed



## On-Going Detention Pond Oversight

(Continued from Page 4)

However, their age and the erosive forces of water have taken a high toll. High volumes of rapidly moving water can be extremely destructive. It is not uncommon for trash (e.g., paper, plastic, debris, etc.) to collect in the pond basins. Much of this trash arrives in the basin washed from the streets through large 36" drain pipes. Some makes it way into the basin over perimeter fences. Every effort is made to keep trash and debris picked up. We appreciate everyone who makes an effort to keep trash out of the pond areas. Figure #3 shows undesirable standing water at the South Pond. If the pond were functioning properly, there would be no standing water. Pending major reconstruction, attempts to minimize standing water have included hand digging trenches/channels for drainage. The larger weed bed around the mouth of the water inlet (Figure #3) is further evidence of recent standing water. Large rocks and stones washed through-out the weed bed make mowing difficult. Damaged erosion wire and stones make it dangerous even to walk in the area. Steep slopes within the pond enclosures promote erosion. Fertilization and weed control are critical. Over seeding will be required this fall to get a good stand of grass everywhere. The grass professionals recommend mid-August to mid-September when the morning dew is heaviest, germination is effective and roots are able to penetrate. The Association avoids use of vegetation killer which might further encourage erosion. Adjacent property owners have also been requested to avoid use of vegetation killer along pond fence lines. The South Pond includes numerous beautiful spruce trees. (Figure #4) The spruce trees not only enhance the beauty of the basin but also provide turf stability. At least one of the mature trees is showing signs of stress with its lower branches dying. The branches will be trimmed.



Figure #4 – South Pond Spruce Tree with dying branches

*No garbage or trash shall be kept, maintained or contained on any lot so as to be visible from another lot*

Questions about the health of the tree, and others in the basin, remain. Both of the ponds are surrounded by landscape stone walls. Erosion control around the walls is critical. Figure #5 shows an example.



Figure #5 – Example of new fill behind stone wall

In the spring of 2018 the Association contracted to have eroded areas behind all the stone walls refilled. Eroded trenches and holes were filled and over seeded. Hopefully, this action will prevent further berm damage. Mowing on the steep slopes of the pond berms also encourages erosion. Grass height and plant density is monitored to assure maximum turf stability. In summary, care and oversight of the pond structures is a significant responsibility and the Association must carry the burden of this responsibility.

### Owner Property Maintenance (Continued from Page 1)

Among other things, the Declarations provide general property maintenance guidelines and compliance standards for Briarwood homes. Each homeowner is responsible for compliance with these guidelines. Our homes/properties are the face of the Briarwood community. Owner investments are enhanced when this community is maintained in a quality, marketable fashion. For example, the way we take care of our lawn – or don't – sends a message about us. Well maintained properties are best assured when each home owner takes pride in and assumes full responsibility for their property maintenance. Negligent maintenance can trigger Association action as outlined in the Covenant Declarations. Let's work together to make Briarwood **"the BEST IT CAN BE"**.

Briarwood Homes Association, Inc.  
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Mailing Label

**Briarwood Homes Association, Incorporated**  
2018 Spring/Summer Newsletter

**Mark Your Calendar**

**Briarwood Homes Association, Inc.**  
**ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING**  
**Tuesday, October 16, 2018 7:00 P.M.**  
**HyVee Community Room**  
**1745 Madison Avenue**  
**Council Bluffs, IA 51503**

(Watch for street sign reminders in October)

**WWW.BRIARWOODCB.ORG**