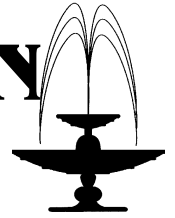


# FOUNTAIN HILLS BULLETIN

A Newsletter for the Fountain Hills Community Association  
Germantown, Maryland



Fall 2005

[www.fountainhillscommunity.com](http://www.fountainhillscommunity.com)

## MANAGEMENT'S NEW TELEPHONE SYSTEM



The management company for Fountain Hills, Vanguard Management Associates, Inc., has announced that they have installed a new telephone and voice mail system that, they hope, will offer a more efficient communication tool for Fountain Hills residents.

Fountain Hills residents may still contact any member of Vanguard's staff at their same extension. Simply dial the main office number (301/540-8600) and, when you hear the automated greeting, dial the extension of the person you wish to reach.

Vanguard's President, Craig Wilson, advises that "The remainder of the system has been changed to be more 'client' based - designed to get callers to their 'community' more quickly." In other words, callers will be directed to dial an extension to get to their community (e.g. Fountain Hills) with, of course, an option to dial the community alphabetically.

Once you reach the extension for Fountain Hills (**x3052**), you will then have options that are specific to Fountain Hills such as ordering a resale package, checking trash days, obtaining an architectural change application and, of course, reaching the community manager or accounting department. It is Vanguard's hope that, by getting callers to their "community", they will be able to accomplish their business more efficiently.

Of course, as with all changes there are likely to be some difficulties encountered. Vanguard invites you to call in to simply listen to the greetings and options and hear the changes and options. In the future, Vanguard hopes to be able to display additional features of the system that may be of benefit to community associations.

Fountain Hills Community Association can be reached at Vanguard Management at (301)540-8600 extension **3052**.

## ASSOCIATION "TURNING OVER" STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PONDS TO COUNTY

The Board of Directors for the Fountain Hills Community Association is undertaking an effort to "turn over" the many stormwater management facilities within the community to the Montgomery County government. What will actually occur is that the Association will be creating an easement in favor of Montgomery County so that the Department of Environmental Protection will have access to perform "structural" maintenance in these facilities.

Beginning in 2002, the County implemented a "Water Quality Protection Charge" on your County tax bill to provide funding for an extensive Stormwater Facility Maintenance Program intended to ensure the ongoing inspection and maintenance of stormwater management facilities within Montgomery County. The law authorizing the charge was passed by the County Council and signed by the County Executive after many years of hard work by citizens serving on task forces, County Council Staff and the Department of Environmental Protection as well as other County agencies.



After completion of the "turn over" process, Montgomery County will be responsible for the major maintenance. The Association will still be required to provide routine 'aesthetic' maintenance such as mowing, weeding, policing for trash, etc. The good news is that the Association will be able to remove some of the costs of the long-term maintenance from the reserve schedule, thereby helping to alleviate the financial burden to Fountain Hills members and, of course, affecting future Association budgets.

You may have seen (or will be seeing) contractors working on these facilities as the Association must bring them "up to standard" before acceptance by the County.



### BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The normal meeting date is the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at the Up-County Government Services Center  
12900 Middlebrook Road • Germantown MD 20874

Thursday, December 1, 2005	7:30p.m.
Regular Board Meeting	
Thursday, January 5, 2006	7:30p.m.
Regular Board Meeting	
Thursday, February 2, 2006	7:30p.m.
Regular Board Meeting	
Thursday, March 2, 2006	7:30p.m.
Regular Board Meeting	
Thursday, April 6, 2005	7:30p.m.
Regular Board Meeting	

### 2005 ANNUAL MEETING

There was not a quorum achieved at the annual meeting and election of Directors held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Maryland law (§5-206, Corporation and Associations Article) allows that the annual meeting may be rescheduled and that those members present in-person and by proxy will automatically constitute a quorum so that the election may be held.

The rescheduled annual meeting will take place following the regular Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, December 1, 2005. You may still return a proxy for the election. The proxy form may be downloaded from the Association web site at [www.fountainhillscommunity.com](http://www.fountainhillscommunity.com). If you previously sent in a proxy, you DO NOT need to submit another!

# Vote



SOME TIPS FOR WINTERIZING YOUR HOME

- ★ Have a heating professional do a routine check of your heating system .
★ Inspect your insulation in the attic. If you can see the ceiling joists, you may need more insulation.
★ Check the roof. Replace loose or missing shingles, make sure the flashing around chimney and vent pipes is watertight.
★ Have the chimney inspected and cleaned, and keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use.
★ Attend to tree limbs hanging over the roof and other dead branches -Clean gutters and drainpipes of leaves and other debris.
★ Add or replace worn weather-stripping around doors and windows.
★ Outdoors, caulk any gaps on the exterior around windows and exterior faucets, and any other cracks that may let drafts in. Inside, caulk around windows and electrical outlets on exterior walls, and anyplace else that may let warm air escape.
★ Take precautions against freezing pipes. Heat tape can help keep them warm during extremely cold weather.
★ Give decks an additional coat of sealer.

- ★ If you have an outdoor pool, it's time to close and cover it.
★ Cover or store outdoor furniture and BBQ grill.
★ Drain garden hoses and store inside.
★ Drain outdoor faucets and irrigation systems when a hard freeze is expected.
★ Learn how to turn main water connection to your home off at its source.
★ Prune shrubbery, add mulch to perennial beds and apply fertilizer to lawn.
★ Make sure your home safety equipment is in place and in working order: fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors... Replace old batteries.
★ Assemble emergency supplies such as:
★ candles & matches,
★ flashlights & plenty of batteries,
★ fill propane tank or have charcoal for outdoor grills,
★ fuel for generators, extra firewood,
★ battery operated radio,
★ shovels and sand or de-icer for snow (DO NOT use salt as it will damage concrete!).

Pet "Etiquette" (again)

Pet owners are reminded that they should walk their pets AWAY from neighbors' homes, the playground areas and high traffic areas. Deposits of "poop" around the common areas has become a significant nuisance.



PETS SHOULD BE ON A LEASH WHEN ON FOUNTAIN HILLS PROPERTY. IT'S NOT ONLY AN ASSOCIATION RULE, BUT COUNTY LAW!

The Association covenants, rules and the law also say that you should "pick-up" after your pet. Let's face it, these things are not only the law, but they are also the

signs of a considerate pet owner/neighbor.

Please be aware that, failure to follow the proper rules concerning your pet could result in action being taken to remove the pet from the community!

Ideally, complaints should be referred to The Montgomery County Department of Animal Control at 240/773-5960 or 240/773-5925 (fax 301/279-1063). Action will be more expeditious and effective!

Animal Control phone numbers:
Animal bite reports: 301/279-1823 or 301/279-1066
After hours call 240/773-5900
Dead animal pickup: 240/773-5960 for animals on County roads or 301/948-2477 for animals on State Roads
Nuisance animal reports: 240/773-5960
Pet licensing: 240/773-5946
Rabies control: 240/773-5960 or 240-773-5925 (rabies in animals) or 240/777-1755 (Health Department - rabies prevention in humans)

Anyone wishing to file a complaint concerning a pet owner who allows such problems to occur should WRITE to:

Fountain Hills c/o Vanguard Management
P.O. Box 39 • Germantown MD 20875-0039

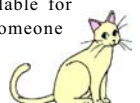


Your complaint should include:

- The date and time of the incident,
■ A description of the pet,
■ The address (street #) of the owner to whom the pet belongs.

Action can only be taken upon receipt of a written and signed complaint.

Confidentiality will be protected to the greatest extent possible. However, because Maryland law requires that all "books and records" be available for review by the members, a complaint could be accessible to someone who wishes to "jump through the hoops" required to view the Association records.





### WHAT IS SNOW "REMOVAL"?

"Snow", a term that always strikes panic in the hearts of Washington area residents. Adult area residents probably have vivid memories of winters past with "blizzards" that dumped large amounts of snow on your community. Do you know where your snow shovel is?

Always stressful, snowfall is often the root of a great number of the most emotional problems encountered in homeowner and condominium associations. In order to avoid confusion concerning the actual process of snow "removal", it is important to keep sight of the main goal to be met by this service during the winter months. This is the annual reminder about what snow "removal" really is.

#### Objective

Perhaps the term "removal" is a misnomer as removal of snow is not the primary goal and, in fact, is most often fiscally and physically impractical. The primary objective of snow "removal" service is to keep the streets and sidewalks passable and safe to navigate. Of course, the old adage "Anything can be accomplished if you throw enough money at it" could be applicable if there were sufficient financial resources and the absolute desire to "remove" the snow. However, we all know that community associations do not have unlimited financial resources available to accomplish this process.

We must rely on the ability of residents to determine the necessity of attempting to travel snow or ice covered roads or walks. Some common sense must be used by residents as they may assume a certain level of risk when attempting such travel.

The main purpose of hiring snow clearing contractors is for the clearing of streets and sidewalks to render them passable and safe to negotiate (i.e. enable residents to enter and exit the community). We must rely on the ability of residents to determine the necessity of attempting to travel snow or ice covered roads or walks. Some common sense must be used by residents as they may assume a certain level of risk when attempting such travel.

It is a generally accepted premise that a covering of packed powder snow is safer and easier to negotiate than a slick covering that may be left when a snowplow has passed over a street. Therefore, under most conditions, it is better to let snow accumulate when residents are leaving or returning home. For obvious reasons, clearing of snow is more effectively and safely performed when there is little or no traffic on the streets.

#### Snow Plowing<sup>1</sup>

Contractors are typically asked to begin clearing the streets when snowfall reaches a depth of about **THREE INCHES** (3"). If snow is still falling, the contractor is to "open" the drive lanes of the streets. This means to prevent the snow from accumulating too much and make ingress and egress possible. This process continues periodically until the snowfall stops.

Once the snow has stopped, the contractor will "clean-up" the streets and lots. This means to widen the drive areas as wide as safely possible considering the conditions of the streets, parked vehicles, etc. Abrasives (sand) would be applied after the clearing process is completed.

#### Clearing of Sidewalks

The clearing of sidewalks is usually performed after the snowfall has stopped. If conditions warrant, this process may begin earlier, however, this would only be under extreme conditions. Obviously, by beginning to clear sidewalks before the snowfall has stopped, it could cost the community twice the expense or more for one snow storm.

All communities have unique areas that require special attention. Areas such as **fire hydrants, mailboxes and trash dumpsters** are examples of areas which, if left unattended, may create additional problems such as: the mailman couldn't (or wouldn't) deliver the mail, the fire department couldn't find the hydrant in the event of an emergency or the trash contractor couldn't remove the trash. Management makes every effort to identify such areas and work with the snow clearing contractor to properly address these areas and avoid problems.

In closing, snow "removal" is not an exact process and there is no way to make everyone a satisfied customer. The goal, as previously stated, is to permit safe ingress and egress from the community and control the expenditures of the Association. Of course, the level of service provided is always determined by the Board of Directors and management and the contractor will attempt to provide the services, if physically possible, desired by the Association.

Hopefully, this article will clarify the process and assist all homeowners in their understanding of this service and in the decision making process to determine the level of service desired.

HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE WINTER!

#### Fountain Hills Community Streets

##### Townhouse Streets:

Fountain Hills Community Association owns and maintains these streets.

- Autumn Mist Circle
- Autumn Mist Drive
- Champions Way
- Club Plaza Drive
- Fountain Club Drive
- Hamlet Square Court
- Harmony Woods Lane (18700 to 18761 ONLY)
- Lake Geneva Way
- Lake Mary Cele Lane
- Little Star Lane
- Mediterranean Drive
- Niagara Falls Court
- Rising Sun Lane
- Rushing Water Way
- Summer Breeze Lane
- Tivoli Fountain Court
- Village Fountain Drive

##### Private Alleyways:

Fountain Hills Community Association owns and maintains these alleyways.

- Cary Acres Court
- Conlon Ridge Court
- Cornelius Court
- Malcolms Cove Court
- Noble Oak Court
- Scarlet Mist Court
- Scarlet Mist Lane

##### Public Streets:

The Montgomery County Dept. Of Public Works & Transportation (DPWT) owns and maintains these streets.

- Cub Run Way
- Fountain Hills Drive
- Lake Placid Lane
- Noble Oak Drive
- Ponsford Place
- Porterfield Way
- Scarlet Mist Way

For information, concerns or complaints about snow clearing on the above **Townhouse Streets and Private Alleyways**, call Vanguard Management at (301)540-8600 x3052.

For information, concerns or complaints about snow clearing on the above **Public Streets**, call the DPWT Division of Highway Services at 240-777-ROAD (7623).

<sup>1</sup> See Box for list of public versus private streets within Fountain Hills.



**What You Can Expect From Montgomery County  
When it Snows**

(from County Dept. Of Public Works & Transportation Web Site)  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dpwt/>  
"Click" on "Highway Maintenance"

- It takes about 16 hours after the end of a 3 inch snowfall to plow and/or treat every County road once.
- After a 10 inch snowfall, you can expect major and primary County roads to be cleared within 24 to 36 hours. At that time, one pass should have been made through neighborhood streets.
- After a 15 inch snowfall, our crews will complete this work in about 35 to 40 hours.
- After a 24 inch snowfall, our crews will complete the work in about 48 to 60 hours.
- However, the type of snow (wet or powdery) and the temperature and wind conditions following the storm can alter this schedule.

Please be patient! Streets are plowed according to their priority and reviewed at the end of each season. Snow fighters work around the clock until all 2,400 miles of County - maintained streets are passable. We will use a force of 200 employees, 175 pieces of snow removal equipment, and we have available 35,500 tons of salt and sand to get the job done.

The Department of Public Works & Transportation's Action Plan

1. Patrols at the start of the storm
2. Spot salting of bridges and elevated roadways
3. Full-scale salting of all major County roads (arterial roads connecting subdivisions or business districts) and primary neighborhood streets (main collector streets through subdivisions)
4. Plowing of all major County roads
5. Plowing of all primary neighborhood streets and all other residential streets
6. Spot sanding of hills and intersections on residential streets

This plan assures that County residents are within 3 or 4 blocks of a treated roadway during the course of a storm and that complete vehicular access is available as soon as possible when the storm is over.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Channel 55 (channel 5 on cable-ready sets) the County Government's channel, continuously updates roadway conditions within the County.

For information about our snow removal operations during a snowstorm, call the Division of Highway Services at 240-777-ROAD (7623). More lines are now available to make it easier to reach us.

**Attention All Homeowners and Residents.**

A Fountain Hills neighbor recently advised the Association about a persistent problem with a dryer vent that was blocked with lint. A blocked up dryer vent is a fire hazard.



The Association reminds all homeowners to routinely inspect and clean your dryer ducts to prevent hazardous fire conditions. If backed up dryer lint is a frequent problem, a solution may be to install a wider dryer duct. **Contact a local certified HVAC technician for further information.**

**Suggestion Box Available**

Reminder: The Association has installed a suggestion box outside the front door on the pool house. The box is for use by any Fountain Hills resident who desires to pass along their ideas to the Board of Directors and Management.



Your suggestions and comments are welcome and we ask only that they be made in a **positive** way.

**Assessment  
Payment Option**

(Not for Fountain Hills Condominium Homeowners)

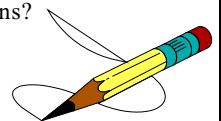
The Association, in conjunction with Vanguard Management, has implemented an electronic payment, or "direct debit" as a convenience for Fountain Hills homeowners.

Direct debit is a convenient and efficient mechanism for you to make your regular association assessment payment. It will reduce your time and effort put in to writing checks. It is the best way to insure that your payment is received on time and it will take away your worry about the weather, postal delays, holidays, vacations and other unexpected circumstances.

A Direct Debit Authorization Form is available on line ([www.fountainhillscommunity.com](http://www.fountainhillscommunity.com)) that must be completed and returned to Vanguard Management accompanied by a voided personal check for the account from which your assessment payments are to come. The form must be completed in its entirety, signed, dated and returned along with the voided check to the address at the top of this letter. Please carefully read the entire agreement as well as the Frequently Asked Questions.

Questions, comments or suggestions?

Write to:  
Fountain Hills Community Association  
c/o Vanguard Management Associates, Inc.  
P.O. Box 39  
Germantown MD 20875-0039



Telephone: (301)540-8600 **x3052**

Community Manager: William Whitney  
(301)540-8600 x3314  
[whitney@vanguardmgmt.com](mailto:whitney@vanguardmgmt.com)