

TANYARD TIMES

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TANYARD SPRINGS COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

- HOA Board Meeting.....9/8
Via Telecon at 7:00pm
- Sithean Sinkhole Inquiry.....9/8 - 9/9
- DRC Application Review.....9/23
- DRG Review End.....9/29

COMMUNITY FEATURE



Pictured above is the playground located in the section commonly referred to as "The Lofts." This playground is one of four playgrounds dispersed throughout the Tanyard Springs community.

BOARD BROADCAST

Fellow Homeowners,

A lot has happened during August 2020 and the board would like to present a full rundown of everything we have accomplished, is still a work in process, and what to look out for in the future.

What we have accomplished this past month:

- Approved proposal to upgrade electrical network infrastructure*
- Approved proposal to update network devices and wireless*
- Added additional "No Parking" signs along Briargrove Lane
- Approved raising clubhouse rental fee*
- Approved management transition audit*
- Approved draft audit
- Dissolved Ad Hoc Pool Committee
- Suspended in-person office hours at clubhouse*
- Approved one (1) new member across various committees
- Approved DRC alterations to DRG* (Page 3)
- Obtained sizeable credit from county for 2019 pool leak

What we are currently working on:

- DRG updates
- Reworking the DRC application process
- Helping homeowners get accounts in FrontSteps
- Community-wide review of street parking

Things to look out for in the future:

- Second inspection scheduled for October 15, 2020* (Page 3)

*For a more in-depth breakdown of the above topics, please see the second page section titled Background Breakdown. If you would like additional information or have any questions reach out to us via

tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com.

-Your Board of Directors (and fellow neighbors)

Would you like to have your photography featured in our Tanyard Times newsletter? Submit your Maryland, Glen Burnie and Tanyard Springs Community photos to tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com with your name and a short description of your photo for a chance to be featured in the next edition of the Tanyard Times.

GET FEATURED!



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HOA KNOWLEDGE CHECK

When most people think of the word “HOA” they typically picture the board of directors or the managing agent. In actuality, the homeowner’s association is comprised of every individual homeowner in our community of 1,424 homes. If your name is on the deed, you are the HOA.

Our board of directors consists of a handful of volunteer homeowners who have taken on the responsibility of fulfilling the duties outlined in our governing documents (e.g. setting common expenses, community standards, and assessments, supervising the managing agent, planning for the future well-being of the HOA and etc. Additional duties can be found in article 7 of the Bylaws and throughout the DCCRs by searching the term “director”.

Our managing agent handles all day-to-day issues around the community, including the operation, upkeep, and maintenance of the HOA common area, as well as enforcement of rules and regulations.

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Our community is run based on a series of governing documents that detail homeowner responsibilities, board responsibilities, and nearly everything to do with the management of our community. The list below outlines the hierarchy of these documents and where they fit in with federal and local legislature:

1. Federal Law
2. State Law (e.g. Maryland HOA Act of 2018)
3. County Ordinance
4. HOA Plats
5. Declaration of Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions
6. Articles of Incorporation
7. Bylaws
8. Rules & Regulations, Design Review Guidelines, etc.
9. Board Resolutions

Our community’s governing documents are currently stored on FrontSteps under Documents > Governing Documents and they are the basis for board and management actions. When in doubt, check them out!

BACKGROUND BREAKDOWN

- **Electrical Infrastructure Upgrade** – In support of the new fitness center equipment, the board approved the PSE proposal for the creation of additional electrical outlets (wall, ceiling, floor, and outdoor), ethernet ports and ensuring all current electrical work is sound or replaced.
- **Clubhouse Network Upgrade** – In addition to the electrical infrastructure upgrade, and in support of the new fitness center equipment, the board approved logicalTech’s proposal to upgrade the wired and wireless network throughout the clubhouse and surrounding area. These upgrades will service the fitness equipment, pool patrons, and residents who rent the clubhouse.
- **Clubhouse Rental Fee Increase** – The board opted to add a mandatory cleaning fee of \$125.00 to the clubhouse rental fee for a total of \$300.00. This alteration has been long requested by clubhouse renters and will help protect our neighbors during the pandemic.
- **Transition Audit** – A Transition Audit is a best practice during a change in management companies. It benefits the community by providing the oncoming management company an audited set of financials at the transition point and to identify any financial or internal control related issues that may have been present prior to the management transition.
- **In-Office Suspension of Hours** – Our on-site Abaris manager will be working in the office and throughout the community, but the office is closed for walk-ins and appointments. Please call or email at tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com. (Previously, the board refused Abaris’ request to suspend walk-in and appointment office meetings, but after six (6) weeks of being highly responsive to homeowners, the board reconsidered and approved Abaris’ request.)

Pictured, despite in-office hours suspension, Mark Moorman is out and about in the community installing signage.





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COMMUNITY INSPECTION

This is our first community-wide comprehensive inspection in our history, and the board knew going into this that there would be a lot to learn by all (the board, homeowners, and our inspection team). Several thoughtful questions and comments have been submitted by homeowners to the inspection team throughout this process and are being collected, investigated, discussed and recorded as lessons learned for next year's comprehensive inspection.

For example, we've had a number of our neighbors (ourselves as well) get cited for faded door and shutter painting. This prompted a lot of homeowners to write in asking what color various parts of their house were. According to Lennar, that documentation was provided to our past managing agent, but CMC denies any knowledge of this. After numerous phone calls to Lennar by our board secretary, the board has obtained the colors used at The Pointe and is considering codifying the use of these colors into the Design Review Guidelines currently under revision. After numerous phone calls to Ryan Homes, the customer service agents have vehemently denied that Ryan Homes built any homes within our community and that they have no color-specific information to provide. This is obviously false.

- **Follow-Up Inspections** – The board decided on a 75-day turnaround (60 days is typical) in an effort to provide more time to homeowners and to avoid the end of year holiday season. The inspection team will be out and around the community for follow-up inspections around October 15, 2020.
- **Extensions** – All homeowners unable to meet the 75 day re-inspection, may request an extension by sending an email to inspections@abarisrealty.com with justification and a proposed alternate deadline. The board will consider all requests for approval in an equal and fair manner.
- **Appeals** – If you believe something was incorrectly cited on your property, reach out to the inspections team and let them know you wish to appeal their decision. The appeals are being collected and grouped by the inspections team for board consideration.
- **Questions** – While the inspections team and management team are under the same parent company (Abaris Realty) they are different departments. If you have any questions at all please reach out to inspections@abarisrealty.com

In the end, the board wishes to learn from this experience and work with our neighbors to find resolutions to the violations that have cropped up over the past couple months. The more proactive our neighbors are, the better our documentation will be the next time a comprehensive inspection occurs.

WHERE ARE WE WITH...

Annual Homeowners Meeting / Annual Election – Board discussion ongoing. No date has been proposed.

Gym Revamp – Equipment has been ordered, waiting on delivery date from supplier.

Gym Opening – TBD

Design Review Guidelines – The 30 day suggestion period starts soon! Our DRG has been long overdue for an update and a bulletin will be released on FrontSteps containing the proposed DRC and Board of Directors alterations to the DRG.

Bulletin Boards – Due to the positive response around the monthly Tanyard Times newsletters, the board is reconsidering the purchase an installment of the bulletin boards recently reapproved in May 2020.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Design Review Committee – The committee processed 23 architectural change requests over the month of August.

Community Garden Committee – To date, the committee has been able to harvest and donate approximately 150 pounds of produce to the Community Methodist Church's food bank. They were also able to utilize much of the mulch created from the recent stump grinding in The Pointe to cover and protect the unused garden plots in the Community Garden. This helped save the community money that would have likely been spent disposing of such mulch.



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DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

A lot of homeowners have reached out to both the Board of Directors and Management to express their desire to help re-write the Design Review Guidelines for the community as these guidelines have not been reviewed in a number of years. Due to how extensive this document is, the board is employing a six step process.

1. The Design Review Committee reviews and proposes alterations to the Design Review Guidelines to be provided to the Board of Directors.
2. The board does an initial sweep of the Design Review Guidelines for grammatical updates and to ensure no proposed alterations conflict with information documented elsewhere.
3. Provide draft document to the community and ask homeowners for suggested changes (this is about to start). During the suggestion period, homeowners can submit their suggested changes via a FrontSteps work order or to Mark Moorman at tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com. All suggestions will be collected and provided to the board prior to the next Board Meeting.
4. This involves the combination of Design Review Committee, Board of Directors, and Management consolidating and considering homeowner suggestions.
5. The Board of Directors will be submitting a final, combined draft version to legal for review.
6. Finally, the Board of Directors will provide the finalized proposed changes to the community for a 30-day comment period, as required by our governing documents.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

When Abaris took on the role of our managing agent they were inundated with messages from homeowners concerned with longstanding issues in the community that had been left unaddressed by our previous management company. Our on-site manager, Mark Moorman, has been patient and punctual with investigating and documenting community issues. Now, the board would like to ask for help from all our neighbors as our community is rather extensive and issues can slip through the cracks. What we are looking for:

- **Dead or dying trees** – Mark recently put out a notice on FrontSteps asking homeowners to report dead or dying trees currently situated on community property. Let's face it, our community is pretty large and its easy to overlook the trees, but if we're going to remove or replace some, let's try to do it all at once and get a discount.
- **Damaged property** – Have you seen a broken community fence? How about an algae covered sign? Maybe even a sign being swallowed up by a tree? Please report it so we can add it to our to-do list.
- **Mowing and landscape issues** – With a community of our size, our landscape crew sometimes overlooks small grassy strips. No biggie, but unless someone says something, we very well may likely never know about it.
- **Sinkholes** – We have had a surprisingly large amount of sinkholes and potholes be reported around the community. These fixes are great news for our cars, but can be costly to our annual budget if not caught and managed early.
- **Tanyard Times** – We want to report on what you want to hear! Send article requests for next month's edition in via tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com or by submitting a FrontSteps work order.

If you see any of these issues around the community please let Mark Moorman know so that he can be begin investigating. He can be reached via tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com or by submitting a FrontSteps work order.



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OPEN FORUM FOLLOW-UP

Below are a list of questions asked by homeowners throughout August, 2020 via the Board Meeting chat, sent to our site manager, Mark Moorman, and submitted via FrontSteps.

1. **Why hasn't grass been mowed around the community as of late?** AMG is contracted to mow the common area every 10-12 days pending rainy conditions, so at times the days between mowing will exceed their regular mowing periodicity. AMG mowed the common property the week of July 26th and the week of August 16th. Between that time period, over six inches of rain fell #tropicalstormisaiah, which resulted in larger than normal growth. In total, the HOA has budgeted for AMG to mow the common areas 22 times each season. This notwithstanding, on-site management has now been directed to ensure our common areas do not get so overgrown while not exceeding the 22 mowings per season. Depending on how much rain we get, increasing the periodicity of mowings at any point of the season will result in extending the time period between mowings later in the season. If anyone feels the grass should get mowed more than 22 times a year, send an email to tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com and copy board@tanyardspringshoa.com. Landscaping is our largest expense and increasing the mowing periodicity will very likely cause our annual budget and monthly assessments to increase.
2. **What's the best way to get answers to daily happenings in the community (i.e. why the grass in the community is looking scraggy)?** There are many ways for homeowners to ask questions, including calling the office and speaking to on-site manager, Mark Moorman, at (410) 360-4018, emailing tanyardsprings@abarisrealty.com, or by submitting a work order on FrontSteps. (If you are feeling unheard you can also try emailing the board directly at board@tanyardspringshoa.com or by reaching out to any of the board members directly. Reaching out to the board may take slightly longer as the board will reach out to management to contact you for answers to day-to-day questions.)
3. **What is being done to hold the person(s) who keep leaving the back gate open to the pool open accountable? Why is this area not secured?** The gate has been checked and is secured. After an additional investigation it appears that some kids broke part of the pool fencing and this is currently being addressed by management.
4. **Has the board considered installing lighting, even if only motion activated, and security cameras around the pool?** Currently, security cameras are in place around the pool area. It is unclear if motion-activated lighting would be a viable option, but this is something that the board will take into consideration as we work with management to resolve the issues surrounding the pool.
5. **Why was the appointment of a board member rushed to replace a resigning member? Why did the board not wait until they could interview additional persons? Why was a call not made out for board volunteers if there was an appointment process under way?** Due to the current election status, the community had three excellent volunteers willing to donate their time to serve the community and the board felt appointing a current board candidate would be in the best interest of the community as the learning curve for board members is extremely high and when the annual meeting is scheduled, this will ensure a higher likelihood of experienced individuals are elected to the board of directors. Interviews were offered to all candidates but two of them were unable to make themselves available. There is always a lot of work to be done around the community and an ideal board candidate will have spent time volunteering and leading in committees beforehand. Currently, the board is juggling the transition of management companies, the comprehensive inspections, HOA document updates, the pandemic restrictions around the community property, trying to sort community financials, and many other pressing issues all while working full time jobs. The board needs all hands on deck and with three candidates ready and willing, this decision was best for the community.
6. **Why did the board decide to move forward with the comprehensive inspections during the pandemic?** During the 2019 season, the board approved a third employee with CMC to conduct comprehensive inspections full time beginning in January 2020. CMC never hired this individual. As outlined in our governing documents, the board is required to ensure inspections take place. Not doing so gives every homeowner a legitimate reason to file a lawsuit to force the board to execute its responsibilities. Lawsuits are expensive and not good for the HOA. The lack of action of previous board majorities only indicates that they were not following through on their duty as outlined in the governing documents. With our new management company coming on board in July, they recommended having a comprehensive inspection team perform the inspections instead of hiring a full-time employee as it would be the most cost-effective option. The reason this was suggested early on into their contract was because it would help set a baseline for inspections going forward. Granted, this has not been an easy process and it will certainly be well documented as a learning experience for this board. We also opted to relax the traditional inspection timeline due to the pandemic to allow homeowners additional time for home maintenance. As outlined in the governing documents, the board is responsible for the longevity of the community in perpetuity and decisions that we make today affect the condition of the community tomorrow. As much as possible, business must go on as usual.



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OPEN FORUM FOLLOW-UP CONTINUED...

7. **What were the minimum baseline requirements established by the HOA board and presented to Abaris to conduct the comprehensive review of all homes in the community?** The instructions were to follow the Design Review Guidelines and the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions Section 11.5, which reads, “Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Declaration or other Governing Documents, each Owner, at its sole expense, shall keep its Residential Unit and all improvements therein or thereon in a safe and slightly condition in good order and repair and free of debris in a manner and with such frequency as is consistent with good property management, all-applicable laws, and the Community Standards, including applicable HOA Codes.” The board also informed the inspections team where the builder(s) were inconsistent with design, (e.g. different exterior lighting on some units, etc.) and informed them of property lines and responsibilities (e.g. homeowners are responsible for the lamp in their front yard.)
8. **What is the status of the updates to the Design Review Guidelines document for what is allowed within the community regarding property changes?** This document, which has not been officially updated since mid-2015, has been in draft form with the Design Review Committee since the end of 2019. The Design Review Committee recently performed a complete overhaul of the Design Review Guidelines, making numerous alterations to almost every section and provided it to the board for an initial comb through. During this comb through the board will check grammar and make sure the document is, for the most part, cohesive. This draft document will soon be posted for homeowner comment before the board does the final step in preparing for the required, 30-day review. (For a breakdown of the six step process that the board is employing for the review of this document and how you, the homeowner, can help with your opinions, please see Design Review Guidelines on Page 4.)
9. **Is the board required to have an open forum at the board’s monthly business meetings?** The Maryland HOA Act of 2018 requires that homeowners are allowed to witness and comment on business decisions as listed in the agenda. (The agenda is approved by a board majority and items cannot be added during the meeting without one board member making a motion, another board member seconding the motion, and the board voting to add it to the agenda.) Open forums (where homeowners speak on whatever they want) are not required by law, county ordinance, or our governing documents.
10. **Why was there not an open forum at the August board meeting?** Oftentimes, open forums make meetings go long and for the sake of efficiency, the board had discussed alternatives for the August meeting which resulted in a miscommunication and inadvertent and premature closing of the meeting. That being said, it is expected that the board will hold an open at the end of the September business meeting with responses and questions to be answered in September’s Tanyard Times.
11. **Are there any meetings in which homeowners are required to be permitted time to speak? Are there any meetings in which homeowners dictate what is to be discussed?** The law requires that the HOA hold one meeting each year specifically designed for homeowner participation, and this is the Annual Meeting of the Homeowners. Similar to a board meeting, quorum must be met to hold the Annual Meeting of the Homeowners. While quorum was met by proxy at last year’s Annual Meeting, there were only two non-board candidate attendees. Additionally, a special meeting can be called by a vote of 51% of homeowners (Bylaws, Section 7.2 (a)).
12. **When can I get a copy of the most recent board meeting minutes?** The HOA contracts with Abaris to take our minutes that are typically provided 2-3 weeks after each board meeting. Upon receipt, the secretary (the HOA’s chief information officer) ensures they are properly formatted and coordinates the corrections of the minutes with the board. After all corrections have been made, the minutes are approved at the board meeting the following month. Once approved, our Secretary signs them and uploads them to FrontSteps.
13. **How can homeowners get involved to get their opinions and feelings across?** The best way to have your opinions heard is by joining a committee as they work directly with the board to review documents, plan events and complete tasking. You can join a committee by submitting a FrontSteps work order noting which committee you wish to join and why you’d like to volunteer.
14. **Why doesn’t the board create a committee for each decision?** In an ideal world the board would be able to put together a committee for each task and proposal happening around the community. By the time a committee has been set up, researched the issue, received proposals, been brought up to speed on the limitations (governing documents/legal), coordinated with the board of directors, and discussed, developed and approved a recommendation to the board, a month or two will have passed. As outlined in the Bylaws, Section 7.2, Duties, the board of directors are the governing body of the HOA whose duty it is to finalize decisions for the HOA.



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OPEN FORUM FOLLOW-UP CONTINUED...

- 15. Were homeowners provided an opportunity to weigh in on the decisions surrounding the electrical and gym updates? If so, when?** Yes. The MD HOA Act of 2018 requires that homeowners are allowed to witness and comment on business decisions as listed in the agenda. During the July board meeting, the board received questions from homeowners, debated and voted on the gym revamp topics alongside the replacement of the gym floor. The decisions as to the electrical updates around the clubhouse were made during the August meeting where homeowners were allowed to comment as required by the MD HOA Act of 2018.
- 16. What is the purpose of upgrading the Wi-Fi and equipment in the gym during a time when homeowners are unable to access?** The poor quality of the clubhouse Wi-Fi has been an ongoing issue and relates to the required network updates around the Fitness Center. Furthermore, in the past the HOA procured a 4G LTE tablet that had an associated monthly data fee with Verizon that was put in use by the lifeguards for homeowner check-ins. Updating the Wi-Fi and expanding the network in the clubhouse will provide connectivity out to the lifeguard shack and pool area removing the need to have a separate wireless contract with Verizon. The issues surrounding the replacement of the fitness center equipment were initially brought before the board at the end of 2019, and it was quite difficult for us to get legitimate proposals from CMC, our management company at the time. In March, after receiving little movement from our management company, David Gurulé created several gym-related polls on TownSq to help gain a better understanding from our neighbors and fellow homeowners as to what needed to change in the gym. With this information in hand, David worked directly with the vendor(s) to find a suitable solution for the community.
- 17. Has there been a discussion about the prorating of HOA fees during the months of the pandemic (i.e. March onward)?** The board has discussed the handling of HOA fees during the pandemic, but our first step was to offer, on a case-by-case basis, a late fee and collections moratorium (for accounts not already in collections) to homeowners financially affected by the pandemic. All homeowners have to do is request and provide documentation. (e.g. letters from employees, etc.) To date, the board is only aware of one homeowner that has come forward asking for this relief. Additionally, our two largest expenses are landscaping and management, both of whose services did not stop during the pandemic as they were exempt from the Governor's Executive Orders. Furthermore, CMC left the community in a state of disrepair and the board has tasked Abaris to correct the large influx of homeowner-reported issues, which were not in the annual budget this year, so part of the savings from the pool not opening is being applied there. Another portion of that savings is being used for the purchase and installation of a pool cover as our recent repair of the pool's white coat was a \$100K expense and a pool cover would protect and prolong the life expectancy of this white coat. If we had had a pool cover from the time of the pool's installation, our white coat would not have required replacing so soon.
- 18. Would the board be willing to release community financial records for the upkeep of the community during the pandemic?** All financial records are available for inspection by all homeowners, and the board is dedicated to making sure all of these are available on FrontSteps, but during the management transition this process has been delayed as CMC had not provided their accounting information in a timely manner. Our first financial report from Abaris will be provided to the board in the coming month, and after we ensure all the information we require is present, it will be released to the community on FrontSteps. Moving forward, this should occur on a regular monthly basis.