

Highwoods Homeowners Association Newsletter



Madison, Mississippi

May 2021

Letter from the HOA President

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your HOA President for the 2021-2022 year. When my wife (Kerri) and I decided to move to Madison in 2017, we were looking for a family-friendly neighborhood to raise our children and, almost as important, for a neighborhood with consistent home values. After all, buying a home is one of the largest investments a family will make. Since 2017, the estimated home values in Highwoods have increased by ~ 5% - 10% and are estimated to increase by another 4% in the next 5 years. This is due to our reputation as a safe, kid-friendly neighborhood and our adherence to Covenants / Guidelines for all homes. With the quality of our neighbors / neighborhood and the City of Madison, as well as such a great return on investment, it's no wonder Highwoods is one of the most desirable neighborhoods in our area for home buyers. The Board aims to keep growing the success of our neighborhood and our investments.

Since being elected in February of 2021, the Board elected Lisa Thompson as Chairperson of the Highwoods Architectural Review Committee (ARC). Leigh Avara and I were elected as ARC members. The Board also established the following committees:

- **Highwoods Hospitality Committee** (J Nelson, Chairperson) – Assists with communications between neighbors and the Board.
- **Highwoods Maintenance Committee** (Marty Prater, Chairperson) – Analyzes and coordinates maintenance projects to common areas / green spaces.
- **Highwoods Nomination Committee** (Winky Newman, Chairperson) – Nominates neighbors to serve on the Board of Directors and various committees.

Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you ever have questions or concerns about Board decisions and/or Highwoods in general.

Jason Dare, President
Highwoods of Madison Homeowners Association
jdare@bpislaw.com / 601-573-7580

Highwoods Board of Directors 2021

President

Jason Dare
134 Highwoods Blvd
601-573-7580

Vice President

Winky Newman
142 Highwoods Blvd
601-594-6682

Secretary

J Nelson
120 Woodberry Place
601-574-0900

Treasurer

Marty Prater
141 Silvertree Crossing
601-955-1606

At-Large Director

Lisa Thompson
124 Silvertree Crossing
601-601-209-2355

To contact the board please use the
HOA email address:
highwoodsmadison@gmail.com

Responses are generally within 1
business day, if not sooner.



Finances



For 2021, our annual income is \$23,850 (106 homeowners x \$225; no late fees collected this year!). This is the total expected income for the 2021 calendar year. Additional funds will not be received until the HOA annual assessment is collected in January 2022. Our assessments pay for all HOA expenses each year. And the HOA does a very good job at keeping expenses below income so there have been no additional assessments required during the year to cover unforeseen expenses. Our usual annual expenses include maintaining our front entrance landscaping, including electric and water bills, postage and PO Box rental, welcome baskets, insurance, and misc. repairs (usually electrical and sprinklers). Each year we have a large project or several small projects that are also covered by the annual assessment. The attempt is made to keep a balance of \$8000-\$10,000 in the bank account for unforeseen issues (the lighting fire a few years ago was such an incident and cost \$5500).

Last year the front entrance updating project was our large project at \$17,621. We now have new plants on the north and south sides of the entrance, around the monument and in front the Highwoods sign. We have new sconces on the north and south entrance walls and a new fixture on the monument with new bright LED lights. The ground landscape lighting is all new low wattage LED lighting, and a new electrical line was run to the north side of the Highwoods Blvd.

This year we anticipate spending money on electrical and landscaping again although the projects will not be as focused on the main entrance. The electrical project will be another failed line to the lighting at the front entrance. Sadly, we did not anticipate that when we had the electrical repaired last summer to the north side of the entrance. So once again we will have some electrical work happening at the entrance.

The landscaping issue we are dealing with is what the Board has not so lovingly termed “The Hill”. Since Entergy cut back all the trees along Rice Road a year or so ago, the fence and landscape at the far end of Highwoods of Madison’s property along Rice Road is looking rough. Discussions with the City of Madison to address the mess left behind are in the works but we plan to spend some funds to make that stretch of Rice Road fit in better with the rest of our landscape which will include replacing some fencing. Homeowners in that corner will receive notice when work begins on the fence.

Some minor expenses for this year will include maintenance for the security cameras, repairing and possibly sealing the brick columns on the north side of the entrance, and investigating work on the Highwoods sign. If you have any recommendations for any of these projects, feel free to email the HOA with names and phone numbers. We always seek several estimates when beginning a project so the more suggestions we have, the easier it is to request estimates.

HOA finances, projects and expected expenditures are discussed at the annual meeting each February. Attendees are provided with the annual budget and annual financial report at that meeting. Homeowners are encouraged to attend the annual meeting to give input and learn what is happening in the neighborhood, as well as, with our finances. Highwoods HOA does not utilize a company to maintain our funds. All assessments are collected by the HOA Treasurer and the bank account is managed by the elected HOA Board. The HOA Board is bonded and insured. All Board members are volunteers and are not compensated for their time, so every penny paid in assessments is used for HOA expenses.

The Treasurer is more than happy to provide financial information to homeowners, upon request, throughout the year. Email your request to highwoodsmadison@gmail.com

FYI Exterior Updates

Most exterior changes to your home require Highwoods ARC approval. The ARC recently approved updated Architectural Guidelines that adhere to the HOA Covenants. The ARC reviews all requests for changes to determine if the request meets the Architectural Guidelines and the HOA Covenants requirements. All homeowners are expected to review the Architectural Guidelines prior to making changes to the exterior of the home and consult the ARC with any questions.

Updated Guidelines can be found at:
www.highwoodsofmadison.com

ARC Members: Lisa Thompson (Chairperson),
Leigh Avara, & Jason Dare

If you are planning a new roof, new paint color, removing trees, updating the exterior of your home in anyway, send an email to highwoodsmadison@gmail.com to obtain approval prior to beginning your project to avoid delays or worse changes to your project.



A new roof requires ARC approval prior to obtaining a permit from the City of Madison. The homeowner (not the roofing company) must request approval in writing (email is fine) with the name, address, and color of the new shingles. Once approval is granted, a signed letter is sent to the homeowner (via email) to be used to obtain the permit from the City of Madison. The City will not issue a permit to the roofer without an ARC approval letter. If your roofer does not ask for an approval letter, they are not in compliance with the City of Madison code and will have their work shut down until the proper permit is obtained.



Fence repairs with the same fencing do not require a permit. However, if you add a fence or change or move your current fence, please check with the City of Madison for guidance. Any changes to your fence will require ARC approval.

If you are simply replacing fence pickets, no need to request approval.



Changing exterior paint colors requires ARC approval. This includes any part of the house: shutters, gutters, doors, garage door, and the house itself.

To change paint colors, the paint name, color, and area(s) to be painted must be submitted. The ARC may request paint samples prior to approving your selection.



Removing trees in your yard requires ARC approval. An insured and bonded tree service is recommended for any tree removal. If trees pose a hazard to your home or a neighbor's home, please request expedited ARC approval. With any request to remove trees, please email details about which trees will be affected, the reason for removal, and plans for the area after removal. Photos are always beneficial.



Highwoods Covenants require all homeowners to maintain their yards, including mowing, edging, leaf cleanup, removing weeds from flower beds, and cleaning up any debris / items in yards. Branches and other yard waste are picked up by Waste Management on our regular trash pickup days if bagged and placed on the curb. Large branches should be cut down to 4'-6' sections for pickup. For specific questions contact Madison Public Works at 601-856-8958 or Waste Management at 601-922-9647.

The Highwoods HOA is not just the Board of Directors. It is every family in the neighborhood. Have you wondered what you can do to be more involved in the neighborhood? Like to plan events? Decorate for the holidays? Interested in meeting more of your neighbors? While being on the Board of Directors is always an option, the HOA also needs neighbors who want to help with small events. Highwoods could have occasional fun events if someone is interested in planning and coordinating. Our front entrance decorations always need helping hands when it is time for the various holidays (lights at Christmas, flags in May, July, September, other ideas??)

If you want to be a bit more involved, consider a position on the Board of Directors! Board of Directors are voted on at the annual meeting in February. The Board of Directors for Highwoods is made up volunteers who work full time jobs and have many personal obligations with their families, churches, schools, and other groups. The time commitment for serving on the Board varies throughout the year and seldom is more than an hour of time during any given week or month. The Board meets (via Zoom this past year) as needed if discussion is required. Many decisions are accomplished via email. The term to be on our Board of Directors is 1 year beginning in February when the elections take place at the annual HOA meeting. Board members (per the Highwoods HOA Bylaws) are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and At-Large members. A minimum of 3 Board members are required and no more than 9 Board members are allowed in any given year. (Article 5, Section 3)

Email the HOA or call a board member to find out more about getting involved with your HOA or joining the Board in 2022.



www.highwoodsofmadison.com

Find all the HOA's important information on the website including By-laws, Covenants, and Architectural Guidelines.

Older and current HOA newsletters are posted on the website too.

Contact information for a variety of businesses are listed.

**Welcome To The
Neighborhood**



Adams and Jenny Garner

146 Highwoods

Randy and Jennifer Spell

100 Silvertree Xing

Mark and Diane Johnson

252 Sycamore

Kathryn Byars

108 Spindlewood



Wes Dean

He keeps Highwoods

looking good

as our one-man

Rice Road litter patrol.

Dick Langel

**He is the neighborhood
welcome committee who brings
fruit baskets and a friendly smile to
all our new neighbors.**

David Lyle, CPA

*He prepares the annual HOA
taxes free of charge.*

Common Covenant Issues

The most common items the Board encounters with covenant violations are parking on the street, yard maintenance, and trash cans left out. All covenant violations are dealt with initially by email or letter. Most of the time homeowners comply quickly, and no further action is required. However, if no response is received to the initial contact, a second letter is sent via email or letter. Should there still be no response, ***the third letter will come from the HOA attorney and it will incur legal expenses for the homeowner. Legal fees start at \$157.*** The HOA will pay the lawyer but the homeowner, per the covenants, will reimburse the HOA for legal fees to enforce the covenants.

The Board is more than happy to avoid legal fees so please respond to any letters / emails promptly. Any extenuating circumstances (illness, injury, etc.) will be taken into account if the HOA is notified of your situation. However, failure to respond to the HOA letters in a timely manner does not eliminate a homeowner's obligation to adhere to the HOA covenants. Send an email to the HOA email or call a board member if you are contacted regarding a covenant violation.

Most frequent covenant issues that could earn you an email from the HOA:

- ❖ **Exterior changes to your home and landscaping probably require ARC approval.** If you are changing paint colors, removing trees, adding a fence, replacing a roof, or any project that can be seen from the street, please seek ARC approval prior to starting your project. Usually, a quick email exchange can keep your project on track. Some projects (like a new roof) require a letter from the HOA or ARC to obtain a permit from the City of Madison. All reputable contractors in the area are aware of this requirement. If your contractor does not know if a permit is required, consider a different contractor. Requests directly from a contractor *will not* be accepted. All requests must come the homeowner.
- ❖ **Dead trees in your yard should be removed.** For safety reasons, please check your trees. Any dead trees or branches should be removed by a professional. A dead tree can be hazardous to your home or your neighbor's home. You could be liable if your dead tree falls on your neighbor's house. So, before the winter winds roll in, contact a professional and have that dead tree removed. There are several recommendations on Nextdoor for tree removal companies. Healthy trees should not be removed without ARC approval.
- ❖ **Parking of recreational vehicles and trailers in your front yard and driveway is prohibited.** Even occasional overnight "when coming home from a long day of fun" is technically a violation of Cvenants and might earn you an HOA email.
- ❖ **Yard maintenance is required.** This includes edging sidewalks / driveways, removing weeds, maintaining flower beds and bushes, raking leaves, and removing debris / items from your yard (including toys). There are always businesses and neighborhood teens looking for yard jobs on Nextdoor if you do not have time to maintain your yard on your own this fall.
- ❖ **Exterior home maintenance is required.** Gutters should be kept clean and in good repair if they are present. Chipped paint should be addressed. (*a change in paint color requires ARC approval*). Damaged exterior / shutters, sagging fences, missing fence pickets, garage doors, etc. should be repaired.
- ❖ **Personal vehicles must be parked on your driveway or in your garage.** Homeowners are not allowed to park on the sidewalk or in the yard at any time or on the streets overnight. The occasional overnight guest parking on the street is allowed.