



Rustic Hills Improvement Association

Newsletter

September 2020

rustichills.info

Dear Neighbors,

The RHIA Board struggled to find a way to hold our annual neighborhood picnic this year, but the COVID-19 stars aligned against it.

Ultimately, it was decided that the event could not be held, based on a number of practical considerations, not capitulation to any government mandate. It is our sincere wish to do the right thing for the health and safety of our neighbors. *So it is with very great regret that we announce the cancellation of the 2020 BBQ picnic.*

WHY THE RHIA BOARD CANCELLED THE PICNIC

Our annual picnic is a **very social** occasion – a special opportunity for folks to get together. Social distancing in little family groups is not what the event is about, and let's face it, masks make it difficult to eat barbecue!

You may be aware that the picnic each year is the result of many hours of work (before, during, and after the meal) by our volunteers, who are mostly Board members and mostly over the age of 60. In fact, we have several volunteers aged 80 years old or more. Some of us fall into the high risk category due to both age and medical conditions. Additionally, our traditional picnic location is not available to us this year, due to concerns over high medical risk for our picnic hosts.

We did our best to monitor the constantly changing government health orders involving how many people could get together and whether or not masks would be required. The guidelines continue to change even now.

During the summer we monitored the State's guidelines for food preparation, including detailed requirements for the training of workers. Our picnic is not a restaurant, but it seemed logical to observe what the expectations for restaurants would be, to help guide our own efforts. You have probably seen plexi-glass screens at grocery stores and other businesses, separating the staff from the customers. That is just one of many things that food-serving businesses are doing to reduce risk of spreading the virus. As challenging as it is to hold the picnic in a normal year, we did not feel that we could "up our game" to the degree that would match the intent (much less, the requirements) of the safety standards recommended for a restaurant.

While we waited to see how large a gathering would be allowed by the authorities, we also checked the details of the Board's liability insurance policy. Not surprisingly, we found that the insurance does not cover any activity that contradicts law or government regulation. On this basis, it appeared that if any lawsuit would arise from the picnic this year, the insurance company could probably wiggle out of any responsibility.

After holding arguably our best picnic ever in 2019, thanks in part to the Front Range Big Band, it is particularly disappointing to all of us that we will not have a chance to try to equal that this year.

The totality of all the above considerations led us to conclude that we will have to wait for safer and more stable circumstances next year. We will endeavor to make your wait worthwhile.

SUMMER ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

We are pleased to report that RHIA sponsored three successful neighborhood events this summer:

- Neighborhood garage sale July 10-11
- Neighborhood Cleanup Day July 18
- Free chipping day – week of Aug. 10

Chipping day is a city service provided for the purpose of reducing fire risk. The smoky skies over our city in August attest to the dangerously dry conditions faced throughout Colorado this year.

A first-time participant in the chipping program provided the photo below depicting the city's crew and equipment at work.



The homeowner reported that he went to the site of the tree limbs that had been removed and was amazed to find that virtually no twigs had been left behind. That is extremely impressive, so hats off to the city's crew!

FLAG THIEF COURT APPEARANCE DELAYED AGAIN

Another COVID-19 outbreak occurred at the Municipal Court in late July/early August, causing cancellation of public proceedings just in time for the scheduled August 4 pre-trial conference of our neighborhood flag thief. This juvenile has allegedly swiped about 45 flags and/or poles in Rustic Hills over the past several years. His next court date has been set for November 3 (Election Day!). He is officially charged in four cases.

BROKEN CIRCLE PARTY BARN

Numerous Rustic Hills residents contacted the Board (and also the police department) this summer to report excessive late-night noise and dozens of non-resident vehicles jamming the street for apparent partying ("dance lessons"). This activity appeared to raise many safety and legal concerns, above and beyond any COVID-19 issues. The police told the RHIA Board that several criminal citations were issued to the person responsible, and the offensive activity seems to have subsided recently. Online records indicate that CSPD spent over twelve hours dealing with this matter in August.

This unfortunate months-long saga presents an opportunity to remind all owners and renters in Rustic Hills Acres that **our property is zoned residential and our covenants allow only residential use of our property.** Commercial businesses are not allowed, precisely because of their potential to bring noise, traffic and safety hazards to our neighborhood.

CSPD CRIME MAP

Feel free, anytime, to check out the citywide crime map maintained online by the Colorado Springs Police Department. The website address is: <http://myneighborhoodupdate.net/> It usually shows that there is very little crime in our neighborhood but we are surrounded by it. You can specify a timeframe by choosing a start and end date. Police reports are color coded by activity type: Property; Violent; Traffic; Proactive Policing; Noise; Disorder; and Other.

If you click on the virtual pin icon, some additional details of the incident are provided.

Two recent incidents in our neighborhood were categorized as violent: (1) July 31 "harassment" on Half Moon Drive and (2) an August 16 "subject with weapon" on Payton Circle. We do not have any details regarding the weapon incident.

CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF NEW HOUSING OPTIONS – HOW DO THESE AFFECT US IN RUSTIC HILLS ACRES?

You may have seen newspaper or television coverage about three City Council housing decisions in June that went into effect on July 3 of this year. The new ordinances generally allow for increased density. Please thoroughly investigate the new policy yourself and do not rely on this brief newsletter article to explain it to you. Additional information is available on the City’s website:

<https://coloradosprings.gov/adu>

or call: 719-385-5349.

The three approved ordinances do not supersede private covenants.

IMPORTANT TO “NO”

NO. The new ordinances do not allow the building of a second residence on our property.

NO. Subdivision of lots remains prohibited by the legally binding Rustic Hills covenants that you agreed to when purchasing your property.

NO. Do not undertake construction without obtaining prior approval from the RHIA Architectural and Protective Covenants Committee.

As Colorado Springs grows, its population ages and housing prices increase, our city’s housing needs are rapidly changing. To help address these and a myriad of other housing issues, the City of Colorado Springs is attempting to increase its housing inventory in a manner that does not lead to increased urban sprawl. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Accessory Family Suites (AFSs), and the Accessory Dwelling Unit Overlay (ADAO) have been approved to give homeowners and developers flexibility on their existing properties and within new residential development.

Ordinance 1.1 – Accessory Family Suites

Accessory family suites will be permitted by right in all zone districts where a detached single-family home is an allowed use. These types of units are permitted as part of a detached single-family residence, but would not be allowed as a detached structure. Currently a single-family home can be occupied by one “family” as defined in the zoning ordinance, which would continue to apply to properties that contain an accessory family suite.

The City’s website states that, “Accessory family suites do not increase the potential number of individuals living in a home more than what is currently allowed today.”

Accessory family suites are required to be owner-occupied – they are not rental units. As we understand it, an AFS is a building modification to better accommodate your parents, adult children, or other relatives.

Ordinance 1.2 – Definitions and Accessory Dwelling Units

Going beyond accessory family suites, accessory dwelling units (ADUs) would allow a second family, as defined in the zoning code, to occupy the property. In single-family zone districts, an ADU may be integrated into the primary home.

Detached structures are only allowed in two-family and multi-family zone districts. This ordinance also reduces restrictions and for detached ADUs in two-family and multi-family zones where they are currently allowed. NOT APPLICABLE HERE BECAUSE RUSTIC HILLS ACRES IS ZONED “R” (SINGLE FAMILY). There is a difference between “R” and “R1”. We are “R”, the most restrictive zoning type.

Ordinance 1.3- Accessory Dwelling Unit Overlay Zone

[Won’t bore you with details because this is for new development only and does not apply to existing neighborhoods.]

**YOUR RHIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2019-2020
NOW CONTINUING TO SERVE ON A PROVISIONAL BASIS
UNTIL NEW ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD**

Contact us at rusticboard2018@gmail.com

Role/Term Expiration	Person	Street
ELECTED POSITIONS		
President (May 2020)*	Doug Eberhart	Payton Circle
Vice President (2020)*	Eric Younger	Rocking R Drive
Secretary (2020)*	Tamie Farris	Broken Circle
Treasurer (2020)*	SEEKING A REPLACEMENT	
Filing 1 Representative (2020)*	Stacy Sahlstrom	Payton Circle
Filing 1 Representative (2021)	Jamie Wilson	Brady Road
Filing 1 Representative (2022)	Roy Thompson	Payton Circle
Filing 2 Representative (2020)*	Jim Kelly	Brady Road
Filing 2 Representative (2021)	Brad Steininger	Half Moon Drive
Filing 2 Representative (2022)	Miriamber Daigneault	Broken Circle Road
APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIR POSITIONS		
Hospitality Committee	Bev Smith	Brady Road
Bridle Path Committee	John Dolve	Bent Bar
Architectural/Covenants Protection	Eric Younger (also VP)	Rocking R Drive
Rustic Hills Acres Trash Coalition	Jamie Wilson (also Filing 1)	Brady Road

* Terms expired May 31, 2020 but continuing to serve on a provisional basis until elections are held.

APPOINTED AD HOC (temporary) COMMITTEE CHAIR POSITIONS		
Audit Committee**	Stacy Sahlstrom (also Filing 1)	Payton Circle
Nominating Committee	Jim Kelly (also Filing 2 rep)	Half Moon Drive

**The 2020 Audit Committee completed their review of the RHIA and Rustic Hills Trash Coalition financial accounts and found the books to be in good order. The Committee was then dissolved. A new Audit Committee will be appointed in 2021.

FAREWELL AND THANKS!

Farewell to Tracy and Fred Dunson, who are moving to the Black Forest. Their home on Broken Circle is for sale. Tracy has served as RHIA Treasurer since 2018 and Fred has served on the RHIA Architectural and Covenants Protection Committee. They will be missed!

And we will need to fill their positions.