

Severn Woods Homeowners Association, Inc.

Happy new year neighbors.

January 15, 2025

I just wanted to give you a number of rather big updates and news as we head into the new year.

1. Fence Updates

In case you haven't seen it yet, we concluded just a bit ago with the installation of the new fence along Severn Road with the grant received from the Live Casino. The Association since has also purchased the portions of the fence from the two homeowners that replaced their sections on their own dime (that homeowners approved the payment for back in August) so once again the Association holds ownership over the entire ~1000 feet of fence along Severn Rd. Combined with the rules and responsibilities for the fence also passed back in August to keep the fence preserved, I believe this settles the 11+ year debate on the fence so we can focus our discussions on more productive things moving forward. Other information on the topic of the fence that's worth noting is that we have increased our insurance by \$80/year to increase coverage for the fence from \$5,000 to \$40,000 to ensure in the event of a total disaster like a tornado, we could replace the entirety of it.

Please give thanks to Mary Robinson (our VP) who single-handedly spearheaded pretty much the entirety of the year-straight effort to make this all possible. She got the documents together for us to qualify, filed it, befriended them, got them to make exceptions for things we were missing, briefed the proposal live in front of the grant Board, and attended a mandatory training for it once we received the grant. She also met with vendors, compiled several bids, was there on the ground with the vendor every day they were installing, coordinated payments and the reimbursements from the casino, went door to door to collect signatures, kept every homeowner informed along Severn Rd, and much more.

2. Property Values

As it is regularly scheduled, I wanted to inform you that this year's realized property values based on the actual home sales in the community has increased again another $\uparrow 5.5\%$ (from avg. \$494k to \$521k). This is on top of 2023's which you may remember was also a $\uparrow 10.4\%$ jump (from avg. \$447k to \$494k).

Severn Woods Community Home Sold Price 1987-2024



3. Welcome New Homeowners

For those 5 new sets of homeowners in 2024, welcome to the community! Please be sure to check out the <https://severnwoodshoa.org/about/> and https://severnwoodshoa.org/hot_links/ pages.



These pages respectively provide all the different information about the community and give you all the tools at your disposal so you are never dependent on the HOA or left waiting for them for all of your daily and/or situational needs. This also helps prevent burnout for these volunteers on the Board so we do not have to worry about needing to increase dues to hire an outside management company to click the buttons on your behalf. Please take advantage of it as well as consider joining the Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/severn.woods.community/> (which is different from the Facebook Page). If you have a Facebook, this will allow you to share information with your fellow community members, crowdsource information, extend friendly thank yous, host social events, and send out PSAs to otherwise function without needing to rely on the HOA. This is also open to renters so please feel free to let them know.



4. Rules Updated

I apologize it has taken 4 months, but the Covenants and Articles of Incorporation updates from your voting in August have finished being reviewed by an attorney (who has also reviewed our rules in their entirety and left notes which we'll share at next Homeowner meeting). These documents have now been updated on the website and in accordance with the Maryland Homeowners Association Act, this will now bind the land and be in effect 60 days from the date of this letter. A redlined version of what changed can be found in the "view changes" link of the Covenant's page: https://severnwoodshoa.org/rules_and_procedures/covenants/



Until March 15th, all the same old rules are still in effect but we will not be enforcing the couple old rules that will no longer be applicable: (1) RVs, trailers, etc. that are on your property on your driveway or otherwise hidden and (2) fences not starting at the back of your house. Please consider these exempt until then when it of course will then become completely permitted. **Starting March 15th** though, please remember that the adjusted rule approved by the community is that all cars, trailers, and other vehicles are welcome on your properties so long as they all are on your hard-topped driveways (not in your grass or dirt) else are otherwise hidden or out of sight from the street.

Also, a reminder of the state/county laws pertaining to vehicles:

- No parking blocking sidewalks
- No blocking access to a person's mailbox
- No parking perpendicular to the curb (need to have 1 front wheel and 1 back wheel <18in from it)
- No business vehicles over 10,000lbs are allowed to be parked on the street in any residential zoned area (our entire community) for any non-temporary blip of time such as for unloading.

Anne Arundel County Police Department is the enforcing party and if you see instances, please report at will using the links on the **Hot Links page**, **AACounty site**, or call the police non-emergency line. If your vehicle is not following these and thus taking away from the liberties of others to enjoy a walk or use a wheelchair on the sidewalk, access their mail, use the full end of the cul-de-sac to turn around, or provide enough room for snow plows and salt trucks to sufficiently service your blocks, please consider this your friendly reminder.

5. Board Member changes

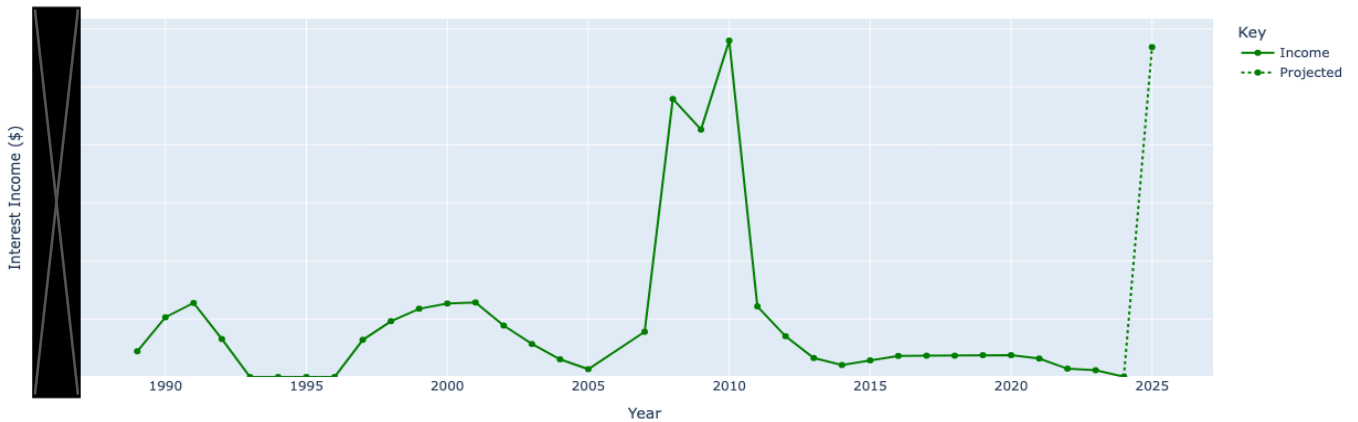
Some other important information to note is that there has been a change of the personnel on the Board. A vote of no confidence was held on November 20th to remove the acting-treasurer. To retain full function per our Articles of Incorporation and have the minimum checks and balances, we asked around and Mike Young has agreed to come out of HOA retirement to help us for the next couple months until we can hold an election (*more on that on the last page*).

6. Financials

Because there are no longer blockers to improve the organizations financials, the business workflows in support of our organization’s finances, or to get even temporary access to the Treasurer’s box of records, we would like to unveil a number of significant strides in this area as well in this last 1 ½ months.

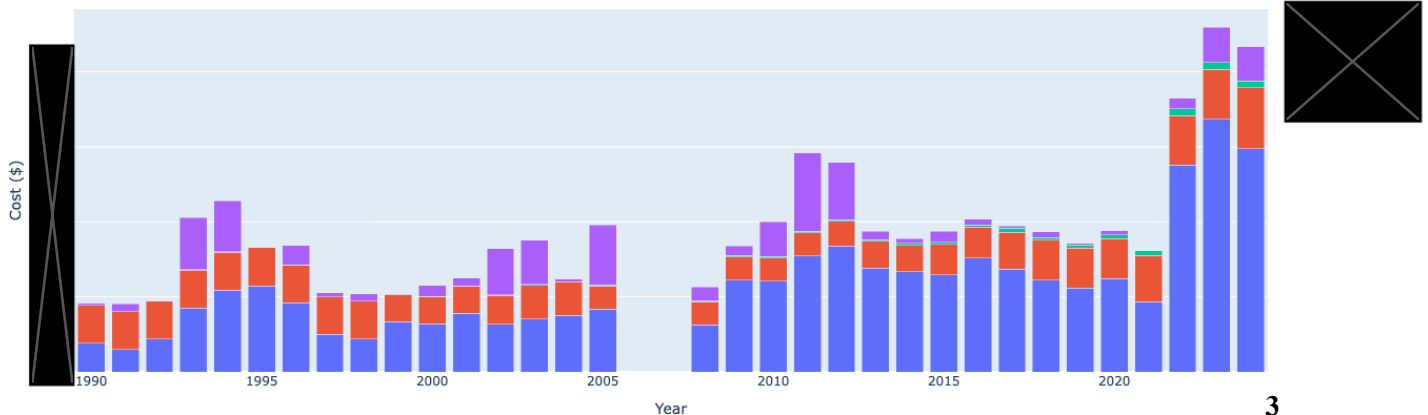
- a. Combined with visiting the bank to get an incredible amount of records (~150-200 pages) we were missing, we have compiled a full audit since the formation of the community to display our interest earned over time. In addition we have also opened a CD for the first time in **15 years** to actually start growing our reserves again. Reminders will now be set up to go off every January to keep rolling it back into new CDs to keep earning this interest like the organization did from 2008-2010. By showing and tracking this we hope future boards take it seriously and homeowners keep the volunteers on the Board accountable to hopefully be able to one day achieve the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency and no longer needing dues.

Severn Woods HOA Interest Income 1989-2024



- b. Second thing we would like to share is we have also been able to create over time expense charts for landscaping, the PO Box, insurance, and it all grouped together with “Other” to show this:

Severn Woods HOA Expenses (over time) 1989-2024




The Board made cuts to landscaping this year, paid PO Box on time to avoid the late fee we paid the 2 previous years, and only paid for one-off other expenses such as attorney fees and lights for the front signs, but it is very clear our landscaping expenses are just exceptionally high. For this, the Board has a new rather radical idea it hopes to raise at the next homeowner meeting. I hope you will join us to share your thoughts and help us crowdsource how we might think smarter on this. Also note that in order to not distort the chart unnecessarily, it does not include the \$40,000 for the new fence or \$7,119 spent to purchase the fence portions from the two homeowners.

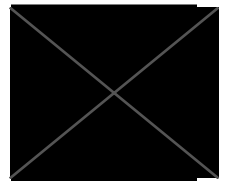
7. Archive now Live!

Something I'm really thrilled to announce myself is the creation of the new HOA "Archive".

Sounds boring, but we now have as good of a records storage system as we can get to ensure the Board is remaining transparent, staying on top of things, and less time is spent in Homeowner meetings debating the history of what was said or done when. None of this would have been possible without the following:

- donation of unearthed box of records from former Board member Mary B. from I believe ~1998-2002
- access to the Treasurer's box
- consistently annoyed our insurance provider for 4 months to acquire the last 20 years of those
- visited former bank to get ~150-200 pages we couldn't get from the President/VP boxes

It is now live on the website but not linked from anywhere and has metatags on it so search engines never index the page. It can only be accessed by directly typing in the URL:  or navigating to it with this QR code.



Today this contains ~70% of all records that exist in our possession with half able to be viewed whenever you wish. To prevent accidental nondisclosure or leaks we have added manual redactions to be safe or respectful of people's names and other data; the rest deemed potentially too risky just have file names listed that you may request to view from the Board per our obligation to you as stakeholders.

Anyway, we'll continue with this but **please share if you find any old records we may be missing!** ❤️

8. Election

I have been on the Board just over a year and I feel I have done everything I could do in that period of time to help scale, catch up, and prepare it for the future, grant us all additional freedoms in the process, and clean up the corrupted/non-working parts of it. The last thing I think I can do now to restore this organization is to hold the first election in **18 years** (2007) and in doing so, I will also plan to step down as President. It's been an honor to serve you this ~15 months and I am grateful to have made so many good friends in the process. I will of course continue to volunteer and maintain the tech so long as the Board wishes, but I know it will run smoother than ever now; utility boxes are fixed, sidewalks are fixed, front fence is fixed, archive/records fixed, RV/trailer battle fixed, electronic payments supported, and checks and balances with Board installed with Board Ethics rules. In addition, Board procedures will be officialized and made public by March, we're making interest income again, homeowners are now self-sufficient, and there's even a self-moderated group chat on Facebook now with 60 members.

I have nothing but the utmost optimism for this organization and I believe with Mary at the helm who will be running as your next president, if you will have her that is, the Association will continue to improve efficiency, modernize, and get us years faster to the long term goals mentioned.



Severn Woods Homeowners Association, Inc.

A meeting of the homeowners with an election will take place in 45 days on Sunday, **March 2**, 2025 at **1:00pm** @ Severn Library, Meeting Room AB. **Address:** 2624 Annapolis Rd, Severn, MD 21144.

The Association will be running with the following open positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer

If you are interested in running for this position, please download a **Election Candidate Form** found at QR code or link further on this page. In this form, the Board is asking for the following:

1. Name, lot you co/own within community, and position running for
2. 500 characters or less of their platform/plan to be made public to homeowners and appear on ballot if it goes to a mail-in vote, and
3. Signatures from three (3) other lot owners (not at any of the same addresses) who approve of your nomination. **NOTE** - lot owners may approve of as many nominations as they wish.

Please then either ensure delivery to PO Box, scan and email this to the HOA email, or hand-deliver to a member of the Board no later than 7 days **before** the meeting (**February 23, 11:59pm**).

Board will then post the candidates with their messages to the website and inform those on the email alias and following the Facebook page as well as make this print out available at the meeting on **March 2**.

At the meeting each candidate will get 3 minutes uninterrupted to talk about why homeowners should vote for them.

If a quorum of 60% homeowners in good standing is not met (*required per our Articles*), vote will still be held to allow the opportunity of those present to drop out if desired, and then will proceed to a mail-in vote with half the previous quorum requirement.

Please read more about the current election procedures and the thinking behind doing it like this on the website at https://severnwoodshoa.org/rules_and_procedures/elections/ or scan the QR code. If you have any other questions, please feel free to email us.



Sincerely,
Tom Friedrich
SWHA President
severnwoodshoa@gmail.com

Severn Woods Homeowners Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 251
Severn, MD 21144



Severn Woods Homeowners Association, Inc.

SAMPLE Election Candidate Form

Name:

ex. John Smith

Lot you Co/Own:

ex. 7899 Golden Pine Cir

Position Running for (from options):

President




- *President*
- *Vice President*
- *Treasurer*

Candidate Platform Message (500 character limit):

ex. I'm going to make everything better. I'm going to bring back the Christmas light contest and I would like to make radical changes in the policing of animal droppings in our community. We deserve better and I am the candidate that will make sure you get it.

(256 character example)

Nominating Homeowner Signatures (from not your own home or from any of the same homes):

Home	Name	Signature
7988 Severn Tree Blvd	Sally Seashells	
1725 Long Tree Ct	John Freeman	
1800 Angel Ct	Danny Boy	

Please ensure delivery of form to the Board via email, PO box, or hand by: **Feb. 23, 11:59pm**

