

NEWSLETTER

DOWNNS OF HILLCREST

MARCH 2024

This newsletter is published after every board meeting. Tory Agnich, Editor

ANNUAL MEETING RECORD TURNOUT

With 116 proxies returned before the meeting, Downs residents probably made a record turnout, though we don't have 30 years of vote records to prove it. Thanks to all who participated. It's important for all voices to be heard.

Two Board members retired from the Board – Bill Perry and Tory Agnich. One other seat was up for election. Those elected for a 2-year term were Tom Schober, Kent Hofmeister and Charlie Miller.

FINANCES AND 2024 BUDGET : LARRY JAMES

2023 In Review Due in great part to the legal expenses associated with One and Three Coventry, the Downs HOA had a net operating loss of \$85K in 2023. Those legal expenses were \$133K in 2023, bringing the cumulative 2021-23 total to \$218K. The HOA, by court order, has been awarded, and therefore has recouped legal fees associated with the litigation in the past, and we expect to recoup a portion of them in the future.

Total expenses other than the One Coventry matter were \$9K favorable to budget.

In 2023, significant investments, totaling \$115K, were made in the Gate House, its equipment and the gate mechanisms. Within that total, the Gate House restoration project was \$89K. The facility had not been renovated since the founding of The Downs well over thirty years ago.

The Downs has 14 pumps that keep the streams and waterfalls moving throughout the common areas. Last year 3 of those pumps had to be replaced for a total expense of \$37K. In a typical year, only one pump will need to be replaced.

Due to strains on the budget, the HOA was not able to make the planned \$34K contribution to the reserve account in 2023. The HOA net excess cash position at the end of 2023 was \$324K, down \$85K from the prior year, due to the operating loss.

2024 Budget When the Board set the 2024 budget last November, it elected to not raise the annual assessment. Given the operating loss in 2023 as well as the rising cost of addressing the HOA's aging infrastructure, it is highly likely that annual assessment will need to be increased in 2025.

The 2024 budget is set at breakeven and includes dredging of the northwestern waterways. Dredging is something that needs to be done every few years to keep the water flowing, since sediment naturally builds up at the bottom of the common area streams. The plan is to start the dredging in April.

Below are the major expense categories and their percent of the total budget.

- Landscape/Irrigation/Infrastructure – 39% (Downs common areas make up approximately 30% of The Downs total land area)
- Gate House and related – 26%
- Utilities – 15%
- Dredging – 5%
- Reserve contribution – 4%

SPEAKERS FROM DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT Officers Hernandez and Parks from the north central patrol division spoke briefly. They touched on trends in area crime – robberies and vehicle thefts appear to be on the rise – and suggested always being aware in shopping center parking lots, remembering to lock your car and to hide things left in the car. Opportunistic thieves look for distracted marks and they target high volume areas like shopping centers. A PDF of their handout is attached.

Asked about police response times, they mentioned that police prioritize quick response to personal safety or dangerous situations and request that other crime reports be made online. That frees up officers to move quickly to danger.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Tom Schober recapped the One Coventry legal history and addressed the unfortunate antisemitism allegation made by a Rabbi in New York. To applause, he thanked Jewish Downs neighbors who collaborated to defend the community and its Board with a return letter. Litigation costs were discussed and even some alternatives, but these are things not decided in open meetings. The Board will manage this. Certainly the goal is, as many said, to "end this," but the terms of ending are all-important. The HOA, not any individual, will manage ingress and egress at The Downs.

Regarding gate operations, discussion centered on how "tight" we expect our gate protocols to be. Some argue for ID'ing everyone; some don't like what they see as privacy invasion by ID record-keeping, some want to return to the relaxed and friendly gate many of us remember. "Security" is a word which means different things to different people. Finding the right balance is important. The Board is working on alternatives that will work better. Additional expense, we are sure, will be a factor.

WATCH THE DEVELOPER

Tory Agnich intends to stay in touch with the other HOA's nearby who participated in the 635 Area Plan several years ago. The group focused on proposed redevelopment on the LBJ edge between Preston and Hillcrest and on either maintaining neighborhood office zoning or considering replacing it with single family residential. There are no current zoning applications in the area. When they occur, the group will reassemble. Tory is recommending that The Downs spend \$35 per year for an HOA membership in the North Dallas Neighborhood Coalition. Anyone interested in following details in this space, please contact Tory. The more the merrier.

WEB SITE

The promised new Downs website is in active development. We hope to have it mostly done by June. It will feature real Downs pictures, a resident directory updatable by you, online forms you can fill out and submit from your computer, all the CCR's and policies in one place, and a calendar and news section that will be updated monthly. Tory Agnich is coordinating this with help from some savvy communicators – Miriam Schober, Melissa Mitchell, Dianne Doggett, Anne Dethrow.

THE ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE (ACC) Has been chaired this past year by Curt Welwood and committee members Joi Uzoh, Debbie Gibson, Shazeb Daredia and Bill Thomas. Their job is to handle applications from homeowners for approval of landscape or exterior of house projects, using CCR's as guides.

GATE ACCESS REVIEW COMMITTEE met part of last year to recommend more consistent attendant management of access to The Downs by visitor and vendor drivers. The committee's recommendations and work done have been reported in detail in recent months. The Board will continue to pursue consistent and reasonable checks on entry and will announce changes or improvements when they have news. Members of this committee were Sylvia Courtney, Dawn Mellon, Carol Welwood, Forrest Hicks.

TOLL TAG CHANGES NTTA is using new technology in newly issued Toll Tags which MAY require neighborhoods to invest in new or upgraded equipment read them. If your new (or old) Toll Tag is not being read, contact amenities@sbbmangement.com.

GATE HOUSE AND ITS LANDSCAPING Bill Perry noted the renovations at the gate house are mostly final, and landscaping around it is in the final planning stages. In order to do this 30-year upgrade without a aspecial assessment for residents, it is being done in stages, with the center island to be completed first. Working with Bill have been Cheri Fitzsimmons, Melissa Mitchell and Megan Stern.

OTHER COMMON PROPERTY Melissa Mitchell has led a committee focused on replacing worn or storm-destroyed plant material in common areas, and replacement of ornamental boulders. Their first priority was the pond bound by Ryddington and Masland. Next will come the front entrance. Please contact Melissa if you are interested in working on this committee.

IT'S MATING SEASON

Ducks are in your back yard, Canada Geese are noisily asserting themselves. Liz Wahlquist suggested at Annual Meeting adding to the mix some blow-up crocodiles to swim in our ponds to encourage the geese to assert elsewhere.

Please do not feed the wild animals! Even the crocodiles.

LET THEM STAY WILD

DOWN'S SOCIAL CONNECTION

Events throughout the year are brought

to you by a fun-loving group of planners. Friday evening Happy Hours will start in April. Neighborhood parties are generally held in May, September and December, with Halloween trick or treating in October. Book clubs, lunches and programs are planned throughout the year. A full lineup for 2024 is being finalized now. Many thanks to Anne Dethrow who led the committee the past three years. She did an excellent job along with a group of fantastic women who worked hard to make 2023's events so successful. Their names are listed at the front of our Downs Directory.

GOOD TO SEE

Patient drivers at the gate

Slowed down traffic to 18 MPH

Lawns with grass or groundcover, not weeds

Welcome-back turnout at Happy Hours

NOT GOOD TO SEE

Parking bottlenecks on 2 sides of Downs streets

Trash wagons visible from common areas

Winter-killed brown leaves on shrubs and trees

What your dog leaves behind and you pretend not to notice.

IN MEMORIAM

With apologies to the Thomas family for the lateness of this, but we've just received the obituary –

Betty Thomas, 22-year Downs resident passed away recently. Her son Bill Thomas and his wife Beverly and their family wrote this in her memory:

Betty was a greeter for Mrs. Bairds Bread and delivered samples of their products to newcomers to the Dallas area. She also developed a flair and skill for golf, becoming a champion amateur lady golfer. She was Lady Club Champion at several country clubs that she and B.J. were members of over the years. She was well known in the area to the point that she was invited to participate in a Charity Exhibition Match between she and LPGA Pro Sandra Haynie.



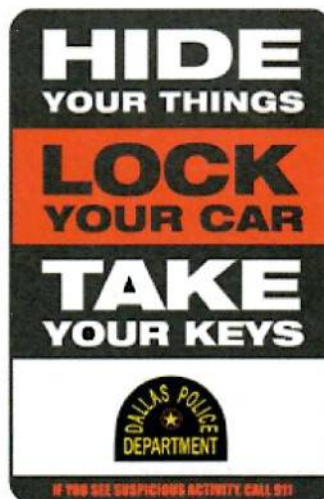
North Central NPO Unit

Crime Watch Bulletin



Vehicle Burglaries

- Hide your valuables.
- Take your keys and never leave a second set in your vehicle.
- Lock your car.
- Park in well-lit or heavily-trafficked areas.
- Never leave your car running unattended.
- Install an anti-theft device.



Catalytic Converter Theft

- Park your car in your home garage
- Park in public places that are in well lit areas near the entrance.
- Install a catalytic converter-specific security device, or have it welded to the car frame. You can also engrave your VIN number.
- Explore Security car alarms that activate from vibrations to the vehicle

if you
SEE | SAY
something something



if you
SEE | SAY
something something

Dallas Police Department North Central Community Engagement

Sgt Lujan 214-347-1712

Edmundo.lujan@dallascityhall.com



North Central NPO Unit

Crime Watch Bulletin

Dallas Online Reporting System



Improving service to Dallas residents is a priority for the Dallas Police Department (DPD). To make the reporting of non-emergency crimes easier and more convenient, DPD has created an online reporting system that is available 24 hours per day.

ONLINE REPORTING PROCESS:

■ Go to dallaspolice.net. Click on "FILE A POLICE REPORT ONLINE." Select the type of offense you want to report. Fill out and submit the report.

■ Once the report is submitted, you will get an e-mail confirming it has been submitted along with a tracking number. The report will be reviewed and an e-mail will be sent notifying you of its status:

- **Approved** - You will receive a second email with a copy of the official report and case number.
- **Follow up** - You will receive a second email with a request to make changes to the report, and 30 days to make any corrections.
- **Rejected** - The submitted report is either a duplicate or did not meet the requirements for a crime.

CRIMES THAT CAN BE REPORTED ONLINE

- Accident (If Police Did Not Respond)
- Burglary Coin Machine
- Burglary Motor Vehicle
- Credit/Debit Card Abuse
- Criminal Mischief - (Damage Under \$2500)
- Graffiti - (Damage Under \$2500)
- Harassing Phone Call
- Identity Theft
- Lost Property
- Reckless Damage
- Theft (Under \$2500)
- Theft of Service (Under \$2500)
- Theft (Shoplift Under \$2500)

This reporting system provides a fast and efficient way for community members to report a variety of low priority incidents such as theft, identity theft, vandalism, and other low level crimes directly to the Dallas Police Department via the Internet. To file a report simply, go to dallaspolice.net and click on the highlighted yellow "File a Police Report Online".

DALLAS 311

Dallas 311 is a simple, non-emergency phone number that connects residents with City of Dallas services 24 hours a day.

311 allows residents to submit a request for over 250 types of service requests, such as:



Code Violations
(high weeds, litter, junk, motor vehicles)



Sanitation Issues
(missing garbage/recycling, roll cart requests)



Animal Issues
(leash, aggressive, lack of care)



Potholes



**Traffic Signal/
Sign Problems**



Illegal Parking



311 can also assist with the following City of Dallas utility accounts and payment information:

- Dallas Water Utilities
- Court and Detention Services
- Dallas Police Auto Pound



Contact 311 by Phone, Mobile App, or online

- **Phone:**
 - Call 311 *(inside the city limits)*
 - Call 214-670-3111 *(outside the city limits)*
- **Mobile App**
 - OurDallas
- **Online**
 - dallascityhall.com



Jan 2021

Visit dallaspolice.net for our event calendar.

