



Castlewood Property Owners Association

2021 Fall Newsletter

October 2021

2022 Annual Meeting

The CPOA is planning to have the 2022 Annual Meeting on Saturday February 26, 2022, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The location will be provided in a subsequent newsletter.

Board Positions

Two two-year Board positions are open for years 2022 and 2023. Anyone interested must send an email with a brief bio to our email address: castlewoodboard@aol.com

SWIMMING / BOATING IN THE LAKE

We have received multiple requests about swimming in the lake. Our response has been consistent, **swim at your own risk**. The lake is actually a detention pond, meant to collect stormwater runoff from the street, as well as run off from surrounding land. The lake also receives water from Dyer Ditch on the south end, and then releases that water at the north end, back to Dyer Ditch. The lake is not meant to be used for swimming and in fact, is quite shallow. The lake is also not meant to be used by boats with outboard or inboard motors. Use of paddle-craft is acceptable, foot powered paddle boats, or small boats with a low-speed trolling motor. Access to the lake, for those not living on the lake, is via the entryway at the southwest corner of the park / northeast corner of the lake. The lake is also a sport lake, i.e. – catch and release. If you see someone who you think should not be in the Park or on the Lake, be smart, call the Dyer Police: 219-865-1163.

LITTLE LIBRARY

The Little Library was installed a few years ago and has need for repair. We are in contact with the company which built and installed it, and they are delayed in their repair due to COVID issues. We are always in need of children's books as this is its primary purpose.

Joe Weber - President 219-227-8930 • JR Thompson – At Large
Pat Ballweg - Treasurer 708-612-1888 • Connee Trepton - Secretary
Anka Tomich - ARC Chairperson

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MAILBOXES

Mailboxes are to be in a safe working condition, as per the USPS. **We have received requests from the USPS that all mailboxes be repaired, which includes, use of the correct mailbox post.**

Repair is simple, and the local retailer for all parts, is noted on our website:

<https://castlewooddyer.webchicago.net/mailbox.htm>

Mailboxes are the property of the homeowner and not the CPOA. ***The CPOA does not repair mailboxes, does not pay for the repair of mailboxes, nor does it hire contractors for the repair of mailboxes.*** Respect your neighbors, respect your Association, and please have all repairs completed by December 1, 2021.

2021 LIGHT REPAIR - CASTLEWOOD DRIVE / ROUTE 30 / PARK

The CPOA board has signed a contract with an electrical contractor for repair and / or replacement of lights in this area. The CPOA owns the lights and trees in the median, as well as the stone walls in the median and on either side of entrance / exit to US Route 30. All lights have been in place and unrepaired since their installation 30+ years ago. The following work will be completed:

- Grounding of all light poles in the median via a GFCI circuit.
- Rewiring of all poles from the base to the sockets. Some have not been touched in at least 25 years and others for about 18 years. All have never been grounded.
- Replacement of all light sockets with a socket designed for outside use.
- Replacement of all bulbs with 5000K, 200W equivalent, daylight, LED bulbs.
- Replacement of light globes that do not yellow and have a tighter fit into the light fixture to reduce infiltration of dirt, water and bugs.
- The concrete bases and poles for all lighting are also in need of painting and will be addressed in 2022 or 2023 as funds allow.
- Securing all light poles to their concrete base.
- Removal of all three ground lights in the north end of the median.
- Moving Castlewood signs to the front of the stone walls so they are visible from US Route 30
- Movement of ground lights to front of the east and west stone walls to illuminate Castlewood signs
- Replacement of light on pole in Castlewood Park with a 250 W equivalent HID bulb
- Upgrade and repair of lights in park bench currently not functional

HARDSCAPE UPDATE - 2021 / 2022 CASTLEWOOD DRIVE / ROUTE 30

The stone and brick landscaping in the median has not been touched since its original installation, between 20 – 30+ years ago. We have received proposals for completely updating these areas, using as much of the original materials as possible to reduce cost. Some of the updates may be completed this year with others being completed in 2022.

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PARK PICNIC TABLE MAINTENANCE

Ralph Smith, a resident and builder of some of the Castlewood homes, is in process with painting the picnic tables and the park bench. They are not as easy to paint as one might suspect, and we thank Ralph for his donation of time and materials.

STUMP REMOVAL

The Town of Dyer, at our request, has removed eleven tree stumps located on the east side of Castlewood Drive near US Route 30.

MAINTENANCE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY & HOMES

The work we have been doing in the Castlewood Park and now in the Castlewood Drive / Route 30 median is focused on maintaining infrastructure. As any good contractor will tell you, it is important to continually maintain and update infrastructure, before worrying about what color of paint to put on the walls. These improvements will be beneficial to the value of every home within Castlewood.

The Association has 175 properties and 174 homes, as one property is unbuildable, and therefore no new homes can be built. In the past 10 years, about 33% of all properties have been sold, many before the current surge of home buying. It is with this change in ownership that we have focused on infrastructure updates, as many who have moved here, have children and the Park improvements were a necessary and beneficial item for them. That said, the best way for anyone to see their home value increase is the work you do on your own home. Few if any have unlimited resources, and as the Association does with gradual improvements, we applaud our residents who are maintaining and improving their properties. Only a couple of homes here are new, so they all will take a bit of money from our pocket, but over time, we all benefit.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS - Queens Lane / Perry Court / Castlewood Drive

The CPOA board had no involvement in pushing for these repaving projects, although we had inquired over the past few years to get an understanding of where each street was on the upgrade road map, and to plant the seeds with the Town Council that interest in the project was very high. We had been told that only Perry Ct. was on the 2021 plan, but Queens and Castlewood were added due to their horrible condition. We were also told that this small project has consumed 60% of the 2021 Town of Dyer Road Construction project. The Castlewood repair was paid in part by a Federal Community Crossing Programs grant.

YARD LIGHTING

Due to an agreement by the Town of Dyer and the original Castlewood Developer, in the 1980s, no street lights were installed by the Town of Dyer. That **agreement requires all homeowners to have and maintain a yard light**. Specifications for the yard light can be found on our website: <https://castlewooddyer.webchicago.net/lamppost.htm> If you need to replace a lamppost, Menards sells those at a significantly lower price than Decker Lighting. The specific language from the

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Covenants is pasted below. If you need a repair and do not know an electrician, please send an email to the CPOA and we will respond with the name of an electrician. Keep in mind, all work performed by the electrician is at your discretion and the CPOA is not liable for any contractor you hire.

The CPOA does not repair yard lights, does not pay for the repair of yard lights, nor does it hire contractors for the repair of yard lights.

This language is from page 7, section 10 of the Covenants: "10. NAMEPLATES, MAILBOXES AND HOSPITALITY LIGHT STANDARDS, TELEVISION OR RADIO

ANTENNAE AND TOWERS OR FLAG POLES. There shall be not more than one nameplate on each Lot. A nameplate shall not be more than 48 square inches in area, and contains the name of the occupant and/or address of the Dwelling. It may be located on the door of the Dwelling or the wall adjacent thereto, or upon the wall of an Accessory building or Structure, or free-standing in the front or side yard, provided that the height of a free-standing nameplate is not more than 12 inches above the adjoining ground grade. **One hospitality light standard**, of a design approved by the Architectural Review Committee, must be installed and located within the front yard at a point designated by the Architectural Review Committee and must be operated on a continuous basis during the hours between dusk and dawn in all areas within the Subdivision which do not have street lights. **No mailboxes other than those of a design** approved by the Architectural Review Committee may be installed and maintained within the Subdivision. Flagpoles are permitted providing the pole is not more than 25 feet in height, unless otherwise approved by the Architectural Review Committee."

ANNUAL ASSOCIATION DUES

We have had some complaints about when Annual Association Dues are due, including being told we need to push out those dates.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, we are required to have our Annual Meeting as defined in the ByLaws, and Association Residents are required to pay Annual Assessments and Later Fees as defined in the ByLaws, which are found here:

<https://castlewooddyer.webchicago.net/bylaws.htm>

20 years ago, the following Late Fees were added, likely due to people continually paying late:

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A late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed against those members who fail to pay their assessment on or before April 1st. A second late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for failure to pay on or before May 1st, and a third late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed for failure to pay on or before June 1st. No more than \$75.00 will be assessed any member in a single year. The late fee assessments will be in addition to any interest accruing on the unpaid assessments. Any interest to accrue on unpaid assessments shall also accrue on late fees.

Over the past three years, we have been able to increase the number of emails addresses from residents to about 80%. Those not using email addresses have very specific issues which are legitimate and verified and we accommodate them. If we have an email address for your residence, it is the only way we will engage with you from this point forward. Mailing an invoice or correspondence (such as this one) is time consuming and costly. We are a volunteer group and as such, our time is just as valuable as yours. We do not, due to cost, use a mailing service, so any printed correspondence is created by us. Here's what that entails:

Email

- Create and Proof content
- Attach content to email
- Send email

Printed

- Create and Proof Content
- Print Content
- Staple content
- Fold Content for envelope
- Print out envelopes and our labels
- Stuff envelopes
- Seal envelopes
- Affix stamp and labels to envelope
- Go to Post Office to mail as we can't place a substantial number of envelopes into a residential mailbox, without pushback from USPS.

Since we are a volunteer board, this is done on evenings and weekends

If anyone with an email address wishes us to now send them everything via USPS, we will be happy to do so for the additional fee of using a service.

We are not mind readers, we do not know if you have changed your email address. It is your responsibility to update the CPOA at castlewoodboard@aol.com with cell phone numbers and email addresses. It is not 1990, email has been commercially available for 25 years, it is not a new thing as

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some would like us to believe. The CPOA is a Non-Profit Business. One of our responsibilities is to keep the Annual Assessment as low as reasonably possible, and using email vs paper is one way of achieving that goal. You receive your utility bills, credit card bills, mortgage bills, amazon receipts, eBay payments, and multiple other electronic transactions, via email, so receiving your CPOA Annual Assessment Invoice via email is no different.

As a business, and by the policies previously mentioned, unless there are extenuating circumstances, ignoring *Late Fees and Late Interest* are not an option, *they are due*. Additionally, Late Fees and Late Interest are due on previous year's unpaid Annual Assessments and will accrue until paid.

We have a policy of not accepting any underpayment, and always return those payments marked Void, with a copy of the actual invoice.

We receive claims about email not being received. For a cost, we can use a service which can verify receipt of an email. We've not added that cost, again because one of our goals is to keep the Annual Assessment to a minimum. It is likely you do not realize, that all those bills you receive by email, do have that tracking service and claiming you didn't receive it doesn't work. We hope we don't need to use such a service in the future.

Prompt payment of your CPOA invoice is appreciated.

ASK THE BOARD

If you have a question which pertains to our Castlewood Community, please send those questions to castlewoodboard@aol.com.

Castlewood Board - 2021

Joe Weber - President
JR Thompson
Pat Ballweg – Treasurer
Anka Tomich – ARC Chair
Connie Trepton – Secretary

castlewoodboard@aol.com

<http://www.castlewooddyer.org/>