



Castlewood Property Owners Association

2022 Winter Newsletter

December 2022

2023 Annual Meeting

The CPOA is planning to host the 2023 Annual Meeting on Saturday February 25, 2023, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The location will be provided in a subsequent newsletter.

Board Positions

Three, Two-Year Board positions are open for years 2023 and 2024. Only two of the three open Board positions will be available, unless we receive the reinstatement of our Indiana Entity Report by February 1, 2023. Without the Entity Report, we cannot change the list of CPOA Board members eligible to be legal endorsers on checks. Currently, only Joe Weber and Pat Ballweg are legal endorsers, Pat holds one of the Board positions up for election, and unless we receive the Reinstatement from the Indiana Secretary of State, she will need to remain on the CPOA Board.

Anyone interested must send an email with a brief bio to our email address:

castlewoodboard@aol.com

SWIMMING / BOATING IN THE CASTLEWOOD POND

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

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. **Per CPOA Covenants, all mailboxes must be the same, and maintained in good working order.** 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 March 30, 2023.

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 11 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.

2022 CPOA PROJECTS

Electrical and Irrigation Repair – south end of Castlewood Median @ East Valley Place

Supply chain issues would have delayed repairs until late 2022 or even spring of 2023. Rather than replacing the damaged electric control box with a similar item, we modified the project with approval from NIPSCO, and made all repairs in May, 2022. The CPOA owns the electrical infrastructure and the Town of Dyer pays for the power. That arrangement made it difficult to coordinate with of Dyer and NIPSCO. Repairs were paid by the insurance company of the driver.

Park Tire Swing

The CPOA Park Tire Swing has been around for at least 30 years, and this year it failed in multiple areas. The tire, chains, and supporting structure was removed to deter anyone from making a temporary 'fix' that could have caused physical harm. Because of the age and design

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of the equipment, and a desire to reuse the support structure, a full day was required to remove it from the cross bar. It will be replaced in 2023.

Tree Trimming

- Necessary trimming was performed along the Castlewood Retention Pond, trees on the north end of Castlewood Drive which are owned by the Town of Dyer and impeded mowing, as well as scrub brush and trees along the edge of the Castlewood Park.

Little Library

The Little Library (free to the Association) has been in place in our park for a few years, and was in need of repair.

- Resident Ralph Smith replaced the broken Plexiglas in the door, as well as improving the support structure of the box so that the weight of the books would no longer cause its floor to sag. The design also had many open areas allowing insects to use it as house. Those area have been caulked, to deter that infestation and old abandoned nests were removed.
- The exterior, which had only been stained (poorly) by its builder, was painted with appropriate material to seal the wood from further deterioration due to weather.
- The area below the Little Library was also in need updating. All existing material was removed, the area enlarged, proper weed barrier placed, subsurface pave edging installed to keep edge pavers in place, edge pavers installed at ground level so as to avoid any movement by mowers, large patio pavers installed at edge of sidewalk, and pebbles installed inside pavers.

Park Fence

- Basic fence repairs as necessary

Park Turf Repair

Multiple turf areas within the Castlewood Park have needed to be updated. The Park does not have irrigation so work is performed in the fall to take advantage of seasonal rain. Those areas are as follows:

- Turf adjacent to the primary sidewalk as well las the sidewalk leading to the Park pavilion, had a substantial risk of ankle injury. Those areas were filled with dirt, seeded, and covered,
- Southeast corner of Park. This area had subsided over the years and retained water. Area was filled with soil to be at the level of adjacent turf, seeded, and covered.
- South end of sidewalk near utility boxes, street side. The sidewalk had, likely due to animals, a large hole under the sidewalk which could have caused a sidewalk collapse. Soil was placed into the hole and adjacent turf are, seeded, and covered.
- North side of Park, area between drains which were installed in 2019. This area had subsided and mowing was difficult with raised drains. The area is approximately 80' long and 2' wide. Soil was placed, seeded, and covered.
- Various turf areas between the Park Fence and Castlewood Drive. Multiple areas of subsidence, animal damage, and unrepaired areas from utility work (including a hole under the sidewalk in front of the Park Bench), were filled with soil, seeded, and covered, as well as daily irrigation for multiple weeks as the work was performed in July / August.

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- Seed Bed cover in all areas, to be removed in Spring 2023.

Mole Damage

Turf areas along Castlewood Drive, between East Valley Place and Route 30 have been heavily damaged by moles, and it has been an ongoing problem for a few years. We have tried to eradicate them by drowning, use of traps, and bait, to no avail. Our issues are primarily two: neighboring properties who do nothing to address the problem, and turf conditions that invite moles, not the least of which is caused by too many trees. We have attempted to engage our neighbors to address their problem but apparently, they have no interest. We can and have addressed the turf conditions. Moles like damp soil, and this turf area drains poorly. It is also not beneficial to irrigate often if the turf drains poorly. In 2022 we chose to not engage the irrigation system once it was repaired, essentially creating a drought situation for the turf. The second step is to kill the food source for the moles, which is grubs and insects. We applied grub and insect killer, 5 times, at a rate 50% more than suggested by the manufacturer, and applied it within 24 hours of forecasted rain. We achieved some success but will need to continue the applications every year. Our focus for this is the Castlewood Median, as we own the trees, lights, electrical, and irrigation infrastructure, but not the land, which is owned by the Town of Dyer. We did not spend any money on this activity in the areas east and west of Drive as it is owned by the Town of Dyer, and is considered by the Town of Dyer to be 'right of way' property which is to be maintained by the owners who abut the property. The Association owns no property near these areas.

South & North Castlewood Median

The hardscape in these areas was installed over 25 years ago and has been in disrepair for quite some time. Maintaining them would be a costly annual expenditure, especially when considering the Association does not own the property. Residents voted in 2022 to return the areas to turf and both areas (including the areas adjacent to the East & West Castlewood walls, had all hardscape material removed, new soil placed, and the areas seeded and covered. Seed bed covers will be removed in the spring.

Utility Boxes

Working with Town of Dyer for contacts, we were able to have all AT&T and Comcast boxes repaired or replaced, throughout the subdivision. The boxes had become public eyesores as well as a danger to children and pets who may have come in contact with open wires. Comcast provided us a map showing all boxes within the subdivision and, which boxes had been repaired. AT&T did not provide such transparency but did indicate they had looked at all AT&T boxes in the subdivision and repaired those not in good working order.

Rte 30 Castlewood Sign lighting (east side)

The light installed in 2019 was broken by an animal, and was replaced in early December.

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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 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 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

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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.

STATUS OF LANDSCAPING COMPANY FOR 2023

The CPOA Board is finalizing its agreement with a company for 2023

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.castlewooddyeer.org/>