



Arbor Creek Homeowners Association

Resident Handbook

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Resident Handbook

This reference book is intended to be a user-friendly summary of information that is important to the homeowners and residents of Arbor Creek. It is not intended to take the place of the official documents and policies of the Arbor Creek Homeowners Association. For more information, residents should refer to the Master Deed, By-Laws, and Articles of Incorporation, as well as to the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations published by the Board of Directors. You can find these on the web site of Arbor Creek — www.arbor-creek-org.

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The Association

Arbor Creek Homeowners Association

Arbor Creek is a planned residential community of 178 single houses and 9 common areas designated as parks, natural wetlands and a woodland preserve. Arbor Creek is governed by a participatory association called “*Arbor Creek Homeowners Association*”. The Association is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Michigan. All the homeowners are members of the Association and have certain rights and obligations with it.

In Arbor Creek, every family owns its house and the lot it sits on. In addition, as members of the Association, the homeowners are partners in the ownership, management and improvement of the common areas.

The Association fulfills two roles in the life of Arbor Creek: One, it ensures that certain standards of living and property values are maintained. Two, it manages, maintains and improves the common areas so that their character is preserved for the enjoyment of all residents.

Like society in general, the Arbor Creek Homeowners Association needs a legal structure to fulfill its responsibilities. This legal structure is provided by the *Arbor Creek Master Deed, By-Laws, and Articles of Incorporation*. This legal structure defines the functions of the homeowners association, provides protection for the rights of the members and describes as well their obligations.

The Arbor Creek Homeowners Association is truly a participatory democracy, and homeowners can positively and certainly affect the affairs and functions of the Association if they choose to do so.

Association Annual Meeting

The Association holds an annual meeting of all its members in the month of October. In this meeting several important Association business are addressed, such as the election of Directors to replace vacancies in the Board, the presentation and analysis of the annual budget, new improvements to the commons, and any other issue that the Board or the Association members may bring to the meeting.

All homeowners are invited to attend this very important meeting. It provides a great opportunity for the members to shape the direction and management of the Association. Every homeowner receives a notice, via postal mail and one month in advance, of the date and place of the meeting.

Assessments

The operation of the Arbor Creek Homeowners Association is funded by assessments contributed by each homeowner. Assessments are determined by the Board of Directors in accordance with the budget of the Association.

The current annual assessment is \$250 to be paid every year before the last day of February.

A billing statement of the annual assessment, including the budget for the year, is sent to every homeowner in the month of January each year.

Failure to contribute with the annual assessment before the due date carries a late fee and, after a two-month delinquency, it carries a legal action and the placement of a lien upon the owner's house. For a complete information on the collection policy, please refer to the "*Dues Collection Policy*" — a copy of this policy is found on the web site of the Association, *Documents* section.

The budget is annually established to take care of the maintenance of the common grounds, to make improvements to the common grounds according to the wishes of the Association members, to contract snow removal services for the streets and the sidewalks of the common areas of Arbor Creek, to insure the Association against liability, to cover the cost of operating the Association, and to maintain a reserve fund for emergencies and for the repair or replacement of elements of the common grounds as the need may arise.

The financial records of the Association are audited annually by an independent auditor. All homeowners regularly receive fiscal reports from the Board of Directors. In addition, any homeowner may inspect, upon request to the Board, all the financial records of the Association.

News and Information

Current information and news about Arbor Creek and the Association are available through its web site... www.arbor-creek.org .

The web site includes information about the Homeowners Association, its Board of Directors, the legal Documents of the Association, and the Board Resolutions and Policies. It also includes information regarding recent news, upcoming events, living in Arbor Creek, the common areas, frequently asked questions, a community guide, and more.

On the web site there is also a Resident Forum where residents can interact with each other, have dialogues about the neighborhood and the Association, share ideas, information and news of common interest, and post classified ads.

Arbor Creek Directory

Every year, in spring, the Association publishes a printed Directory with the contact information of all the residents of Arbor Creek. This Directory is distributed only to the households in Arbor Creek.

The contact information listed in this Directory is obtained from a form that is sent every January to every homeowner together with the annual dues notice. This form is to be returned together with the dues payment. The contact information collected in this way is always kept private and exclusively for the use of the Association.

The Association makes great efforts to keep current the information in the Directory. However, sometimes additions, corrections or deletions to the Directory are necessary. The interested parties should send them to the Association via email or regular postal service.

Contact Information

Postal address: Arbor Creek Homeowners Association
2898 Cook Creek Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Email Address: messages@arbor-creek.org

Web Site: www.arbor-creek.org



Governance

Board of Directors

A five-member volunteer Board of Directors runs the business of the Association. The members of the Board of Directors are homeowners of Arbor Creek. While the individual Board members come from various parts of the community, the Board focuses on the needs of the community as a whole. Board members, no matter the area in which they live, are obligated to act in the best interest of the entire Homeowners Association.

Each director serves a two-year term, and the terms are staggered so that three directors are elected one year by the homeowners and two directors the following year. Any Arbor Creek homeowner may run for the Board of Directors, and all 178 homeowners can vote in the election of Board members. The election takes place at the Annual Meeting of the Association in the month of October each year. Voting in the election can take place through personal participation at the meeting or through a proxy ballot handled to any of the Board members at or before the meeting.

Because it is required by the laws of the State of Michigan, each homeowner needs to file a written notice with the Board of the Association to designate an individual representative on his or her behalf regarding voting in the Association. This representative can be the homeowner himself or herself, or any other person at least 18 year old. The representative will vote at meetings of the Association and will receive all official notices and communications from the Association.

To contact the Board of Directors you can use the contact form on the web site of the Association — www.arbor-creek.org — or directly write an email to... messages@arbor-creek.org

or write a letter to... Board of Directors
 Arbor Creek Homeowners Association
 2898 Cook Creek Drive
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Board Functions

The functions and powers of the Board of Directors are defined by the By-Laws of the Association and by the Laws of the State of Michigan. The main duties and powers assigned to the Board are:

- ▶ Seek from the homeowners and residents compliance with the legal Documents of Arbor Creek.
- ▶ Establish sound fiscal policies and maintain accurate records.
- ▶ Develop a workable budget, keeping in mind the needs, requirements and expectations of the community.
- ▶ Establish reserve funds.

- ▶ Act on budget items and determine assessment rates.
- ▶ Collect assessments from the homeowners.
- ▶ Appoint committees and delegate authority to them.
- ▶ Either establish the necessary guidelines for a volunteer management of the common elements the Association and implement them, or employ a professional manager.
- ▶ Determine and supervise the duties of the manager of the common elements.
- ▶ Review local and state laws before creating new rules or before sending By-laws amendments to the membership for approval.
- ▶ Establish, publicize and seek compliance of rules and penalties.
- ▶ Following due procedure, authorize legal action against homeowners who do not comply with the Documents and rules of the Association.
- ▶ Select an auditor, attorney, insurance agent, and other professionals needed by the Association.
- ▶ Provide adequate insurance coverage for the Association.
- ▶ Inform the Association members of important Board decisions and transactions.
- ▶ See that the Association is protected from the acts of all parties with fiscal responsibilities.
- ▶ Organize and conduct the election process for new Board members.

Board Meetings

The Board of Directors of the Association meets once a month, usually on the first Tuesday at 7:00 PM. The Board meetings are open to all Association members. If you are interested in attending a meeting, or in calling the attention of the Board regarding an issue that you would like the Board to address, please contact the Board at least one week in advance of the meeting.

If necessary, the Board may meet in “Executive Session” which is not open to other Association members. This session may deal with confidential information related to legal issues, individual homeowners issues, contracts, and other similar topics. Minutes are kept of this meeting but are not available for examination by Association members.

The decisions of the Board are always made by a majority vote.

Association Officers

The Association has four officers: the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. These officers are elected by the Board of Directors. The officers are usually elected from among the Directors, but only the President has to be a member of the Board of Directors. The Board may choose to elect the other officers from among other volunteer homeowners.

Committees

Volunteer Committees are the chief support system of the Association. For the membership, they are one of the most direct forms of participation in the governance and affairs of the Association. They assist in the administration and management of the affairs of the Association and help the Board of Directors make informed decisions.

For the efficient and comprehensive administration and management of the Association, two types of committees are needed: standing and ad-hoc. *Standing committees* perform a continuing function, operating indefinitely, though their membership may change. *Ad-hoc committees* are set up to accomplish specific objectives, and their existence ends once those objectives are accomplished.

Currently, the standing committees of Arbor Creek are: Landscaping, Social Events, Communications, Resident Directory, Information Technology (web site, forums, email services), and Clean-up.

If you would like to volunteer for any of these committees, or for the Board, or for any other task, please contact the Board of the Association using the contact form on the web site of the Association or directly write an email to... messages@arbor-creek.org

or write a letter to... Board of Directors
Arbor Creek Homeowners Association
2898 Cook Creek Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48103



Homeownership

Aesthetic and Architectural Standards

In Arbor Creek property owners are responsible for ensuring that changes made to the exterior of their homes are in compliance with the aesthetic and architectural standards determined by the By-Laws and the policies of the Board of Directors of the Association.

Before any work is started in a house, and before a building permit is requested from the authorities of Pittsfield Township, the homeowner should submit on writing to the Board for approval the nature and specifications of the work to be done to the exterior of their house. No work can begin until the application has been approved by the Board.

Exterior modifications which must be approved by the Board include:

- ▶ basketball backboards (fixed)
- ▶ decks and patios
- ▶ driveway changes
- ▶ exterior lighting changes
- ▶ fencing
- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ hot tubs
- ▶ house additions
- ▶ landscaping plans
- ▶ paint color changes
- ▶ play-sets (fixed)
- ▶ pools
- ▶ roofing
- ▶ siding style and material
- ▶ storage structures
- ▶ sun rooms
- ▶ windows and awnings

The list shown above represents initiatives most commonly encountered by homeowners, but the list does not necessarily represent *all* the initiatives which may require approval. In case of doubt, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to check with the Board of Directors to determine whether a planned initiative is subject to the Board review process.

Property Maintenance

Homeowners in Arbor Creek are responsible for maintaining their property, and for keeping their homes, landscaping and yards in good condition. While formal inspections are not performed on private properties, the Association does notify those homeowners when their houses, landscaping or yards are not in compliance with the Association standards, with the Association By-Laws or with the Ordinances of Pittsfield Township.

It is important to realize that the extension of land between the street and the sidewalk in every lot of Arbor Creek belongs to the Homeowners Association. However, the By-Laws of Arbor Creek give to each homeowner the responsibility of maintaining in good standing this extension in front of their property. The proper maintenance of this extension includes the turf, the tree or trees, and the sidewalk. The damage for neglect to these elements will be repaired or replaced by the homeowner at his or her own expense.

House Landscaping

The By-Laws of the Association require from the owner of every house to develop a landscaping treatment for his or her property. This landscaping treatment should complement, enhance and harmonize with adjacent properties. The specific plans for landscaping around the house should be submitted to the Association Board for approval before any work begins.

Household Solid Waste, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection

Trash and yard waste are collected once per week by a contractor of Pittsfield Township. The recycling materials are collected every other week. Residents pay for these services together with their water bills on a quarterly basis. To obtain information on the type of materials that are collected by these services, Arbor Creek residents can contact the Pittsfield Township Utilities Department at (734) 822-3105 or via email at: utilities@pittsfieldtp.org.

The collection day is on Fridays. All the refuse and recyclables, properly prepared, should be set out at the curb by 6:00 AM.

It is important to properly secure the trash, the recyclables materials and the yard waste that are set out at the curb so that they are not blown away by the wind. *Blown-away materials are the number-one polluting factor of the wetlands and the woodland preserve in Arbor Creek, and they are the number-one cause of trash found in the common areas.*

Once the collection has taken place, the cans, recycling bins and other containers should be removed from the curb the same day by the homeowner. Trash bags, cans or other trash containers cannot be stored outside the house.

If the collection day falls on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day or Christmas Day, the collection will take place one day later.

The collection of yard waste material takes place only from April 1 to December 15.

Pets

Pittsfield Township's Ordinances provide guidelines and regulations regarding the possession of animals. Here are some highlights of these guidelines:

- ▶ Any animal off its owner's premises must be leashed and/or be under the owner's control at all times. This regulation includes dogs and cats, among others.
- ▶ Pet waste must be immediately removed and properly disposed of by the owner of the animal.
- ▶ All dogs must be registered and properly licensed by the proper authorities of Washtenaw County.
- ▶ Wild animals cannot be kept in any house or lot in a residential area.
- ▶ Dangerous animals may be impounded or destroyed by the Animal Control authorities.

For more information or to report violations of animal ordinances call the Pittsfield Department of Public Safety at (734) 944-4911.

The By-Laws of Arbor Creek provide additional guidelines and regulations about the possession of animals in the community:

- ▶ Dog houses and unattended tethering of dogs are not allowed in Arbor Creek.
- ▶ The owners of dogs that bark frequently and are a nuisance to the neighbors may receive, after a due procedure, a fine by the Association.

Vehicles

No motor homes, trailers, campers, boats, large trucks, or unlicensed / non-operable vehicles may be parked on any property or street in Arbor Creek, unless the vehicle is housed inside a garage.

Signs

Both Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County have Ordinances that regulate the use of signs in residential neighborhoods and along the streets and intersections. Here are some highlights that apply to Arbor Creek:

- ▶ *For Sale* or *For Rent* signs are temporarily permitted to one per residence and should not exceed 3 square feet in area per side. They can be placed in the front yard.
- ▶ Business signs are not permitted anywhere in Arbor Creek.
- ▶ Signs, either permanent or temporary, cannot be placed between the street and the sidewalk anywhere in Arbor Creek.

- ▶ No sign is permitted near or at street intersections. This regulation refers, among others, to the following type of signs: *For Sale*, *For Rent*, *Garage Sale*, and contractor or services signs.
- ▶ No sign is permitted near or at the three entrances to Arbor Creek. These entrances are on Waters Road, Boulder Ridge Boulevard and Spring Ridge Drive.

For more information on the use of signs, contact the Pittsfield Township authorities at 734-822-2111, or the Washtenaw County Road Commission at (734) 761-1500.



Common Ownership

Arbor Creek Commons

The commons of Arbor Creek include three types of areas: recreational grounds, natural habitats and watershed preserves. The recreational grounds are a series of parks with walking paths. The ecological and watershed preserves are a system of natural wetlands, flood prevention basins, and an undisturbed woodland.

These commons were designed for the enjoyment of the residents of Arbor Creek and their guests. They also serve as natural habitats for native species of plants and animals, as a protection of the watershed of the Huron River, and as flood prevention systems.

The responsibility for the care and preservation of the recreational and ecological character of the commons is in the hands of all the homeowners and residents of Arbor Creek.

The system of parks and walking paths is directly maintained by the Association. Because the development of Arbor Creek was only recently finished, there is an ongoing improvement plan for this system of parks and walking paths. The Landscape Committee is in charge of managing this long term improvement plan.

The operation and the management of the system of natural wetlands and flood prevention basins in Arbor Creek are under the jurisdiction of the *Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner*.

The woodland preserve is an undisturbed habitat for many trees, plants and animals, and just a minimum maintenance is done by the Association along the walking path that goes through the eastern side of it.

The collaboration of all the homeowners and residents of Arbor Creek is requested for the care and protection of the commons. Here are some general guidelines that will help with the preservation of the vegetation, the wildlife habitats and the ecological character of the commons:

- ▶ Homeowners are invited to help improve the park areas of the commons. The Landscape Committee welcomes your ideas, talents and participation.
- ▶ If you would like to contribute with a particular landscaping feature or planting specimen anywhere in the park areas of the commons, you are welcomed to coordinate your contribution with the Landscape Committee. Please do not make any modifications to the commons without first consulting with the Committee.
- ▶ The natural habitats, basins and wetlands are very sensitive and delicate ecological systems. Dumping trash, debris, yard waste or any substance damages them, injures the wildlife and pollutes the waterways. Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County prosecute those who do not respect these ecological areas.
- ▶ Cutting or clearing any vegetation in the woodland preserve and in the wetlands diminishes their integrity and ecological balance. If for any reason you think that some live or death vegetation should be removed from them, seek first approval from the Landscape Committee.

- ▶ Pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and any other landscaping chemical or organic applications may be a necessary recourse for the upkeep of the lawns and landscape around our houses. However, they are not so for the natural habitats and wetlands. They may seriously alter or damage their nature and character and injure the wildlife.
- ▶ Domesticated animals such as dogs and cats are our friends and home companions. However, they can be a deathly menace to the wildlife found in the wetlands and the woodlands preserve. Having pets unleashed outdoors pose a threat to the wild animals. Pittsfield Township will prosecute those pet owners who do not leash their pets while outdoors.
- ▶ In our Association the general rule regarding the commons is: *Ask first before taking any action.*

Common Grounds Maintenance

In Arbor Creek there are 9 common areas designated as parks, wetlands and a woodland preserve. These common areas are own, maintained and improved by the Homeowners Association. Under the supervision of the Board of Directors, the Landscape Committee is in charge of organizing and managing the ongoing maintenance and improvements of these common grounds. The Association currently contracts for grounds maintenance services and street snow removal.

To report any concern regarding the common grounds, contact the Landscape Committee or the Board using the email address... messages@arbor-creek.org .

All homeowners can positively help maintain the Association grounds in good condition by following two simple guidelines:

1. *Trash collection days are always windy days.*

Take care to properly secure the trash and the recyclables materials that are set out at the curb so that they are not blown away by the wind.

Blown-away materials are the number-one polluting factor of the wetlands and the woodland preserve in Arbor Creek, and they are the number-one cause of trash found in the common areas.

2. *Do not dump trash, debris or yard refuse anywhere in Arbor Creek.*

Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County prosecute those who do not respect the common grounds.

Wetlands and Storm Water Management

Storm water from the common areas and from the streets of Arbor Creek flows to the wetlands and flood-prevention basins. The structural maintenance and the protection of these wetlands and basins is in the hands of the *Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner*. The aesthetic maintenance (routine cleaning) remains the responsibility of the Arbor Creek Homeowners Association.

All homeowners can positively help maintain the wetlands and detention basins in good condition by following two simple guidelines:

1. *Trash collection days are always windy days.*

Take care to properly secure the trash and the recyclables materials that are set out at the curb so that they are not blown away by the wind.

Blown-away materials are the number-one polluting factor of the wetlands and the woodland preserve in Arbor Creek, and they are the number-one cause of trash found in the common areas.

2. *Do not dump trash, debris or yard refuse anywhere in Arbor Creek.*

Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County prosecute those who do not respect the common grounds.

Illegal Dumping

Disposing of household trash, construction debris, yard waste, or any other waste material in Association property, in the streets of Arbor Creek, or in any of the storm drains in the subdivision is considered illegal dumping.

Illegal dumping is prosecuted by Pittsfield Township and Washtenaw County and carries a substantial fine.

If the Homeowners Association has to collect the dumped material and the resident who discarded it can be identified, that person may be billed for the cost of cleaning and hauling away the material. If no-one can be identified as having dumped the refuse, the cost of that cleaning and hauling is paid by the entire Homeowners Association, thus increasing costs for everyone.



Security

Neighborhood Watch

The Arbor Creek Homeowners Association encourages residents to work with the Police in preventing crime. If residents see something suspicious, they should notify the *Pittsfield Township Department of Public Safety* at the telephone number: (734) 944-4911.

Also, in Arbor Creek there is an active *Neighborhood Watch* program to help keep community safe and informed. Through this program all residents act as the eyes and ears of the community and report any suspicious activity to the Police.

The program consists of a “volunteer block captain” for each street, who maintains emergency contact information for his or her neighbors. Should an emergency occur, or an urgent alert be issue by the Pittsfield Township Department of Public Safety, the block captain notifies all the neighbors as soon as possible.

For more information on the Neighborhood Watch program, including the name and contact information of the block captains, please contact the Board of the Association.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Emergencies	911
Pittsfield Township Police — non-emergencies	734-944-4911
Pittsfield Township Fire Department — non-emergencies	734-944-4911
County Sheriff — non-emergencies	734-971-8400
Huron Valley Ambulance — non-emergencies.....	734-477-6341
Pittsfield Township	734-822-3101
Washtenaw County	734-222-4357
Secretary of State — local office	734-665-0627
City of Ann Arbor	734-994-2700
Ann Arbor Library — Pittsfield Branch	734-327-4200



Arbor Creek Map

