



Winter 2016-17

Presidents Letter

The history of volunteerism in America may be traced back to the earliest settlers faced with the challenges of relocating and building settlements. Some historians believe that “togetherness was vital for survival” and was helpful to farmers and in turn remembered by future generations as a way of helping others in need.

In 1736 Benjamin Franklin founded the first volunteer firehouse and many small communities still depend on this tradition. In the early 1800 many young people were inspired through their churches to get involved with outreach such as helping the homeless and those less fortunate. The YMCA was started in the mid 1800’s on a college campus in Michigan. In 1881 the American Red Cross was established and shortly after the United Way started in Denver and currently helps coordinate local services for those in need.

The Lions Club, Kiwanis, and the Rotary Club began in the early 1900’s and the Great Depression saw the creation of soup kitchens and organizations that focused on basic services—food and shelter. The number of volunteer organizations expanded in the 21st century and continues to evolve today. Additional information can be found at www.charitylovetoknow.com.

As the President of the Colony Board of Directors, I frequently see evidence of neighbor helping neighbor. Lawns are mowed, snow is shoveled and many watch over houses when we leave for trips. Additionally, I’m aware of residents who volunteer in many capacities. If you’ve voted recently you’ve seen Mike Hart volunteering at the polls. At the last philharmonic I attended I saw Ellen Tunnell’s name listed as a volunteer for LexArts. Rekha Palli is president of the Bluegrass Indian-American Civic Society, which raises funds for educational scholarships. My husband, Jerry Weisenfluh is a board member for Kentucky River Water Watch, a group dedicated to clean water for Kentucky. Over the years many of you have given your time and considerable talents to serve as Colony Board members. I know many others have contributed and continue volunteer with other civic and nonprofit groups in our community.

In the future I would like to highlight some of the organizations and groups our residents are involved with and look forward to hearing from you if you would like to “volunteer” some time to talk with me about your volunteer experiences. You can email me at sherriweisenfluh@gmail.com

Sherri Weisenfluh, President
The Colony Neighborhood Association

Rainy Tree Lighting Event

Despite a cold steady drizzle a hearty group of adults and children turned out for cocoa, cookies and a host of snacks. A table with an umbrella provided a respite from the rain and allowed the participants an opportunity to gather and talk. Santa did make an appearance, and each child received a stocking and some candy as they confided what they wanted for Christmas. The tree was decorated and helped light up the night. Many thanks to all those who brought their cheer and helped make this annual event given the weather the best it could be.



Safety

A number of phone scams have been taking place in Lexington. If you receive a phone call and have any doubts about the validity of the call please report it to the local police department. The following information was taken from Nextdoor Colony, the Neighborhood App. Please be aware that the Lexington Police Department monitors the posts and has appointed a police officer to liaison with neighborhoods for safety.

Posted on Feb. 6, 2017 in Crime and Safety to 23 neighborhoods.

I was contacted several times yesterday by someone posing as a member of the Sheriff's department. They said I had ignored jury duty letters. I called the Sheriff's office to confirm and was told it was a scam. They are trying to convince you to pay fines and will even come to your door to pick them up. Please don't be fooled by these people. The Sheriff's office does not do this.

Water Quality Incentive Grant

Progress is being made towards the Urban County Government Water Quality Grant obtained in 2016. The purpose of the grant is to continue the eradication of invasive bush honeysuckle and the replanting of native plants. Invasive plants like honeysuckle crowd out native plants and lead to stream bank erosion and invasive plants have shallow root systems that do a poor job of filtering harmful materials from entering waterways. Water quality is impacted with a decrease in filtration.

With permission from property owners the grant allows for the neighborhood association to hire a contractor to cut and treat invasive honeysuckle and replant native material. A Request for Pricing (RFP) was sent to four contractors. The landscaping Committee on the Board of Directors will review each RFP and select a contractor. The grant covers the cost of the removal and replanting.

Our Community

I wanted to alert the neighborhood to two issues highlighted in the Herald Leader. The first article deals with development on Versailles Road and Delmont Drive. In response to a request to build a gas station that includes a mini mart, Council Member Peggy Henson filed a moratorium on building permits from 1411 Versailles Road to 1907 Versailles Road and 1411 Versailles - 1824 Versailles Road.

The results can be read in the article. On behalf of the Colony Neighborhood Association I wrote a letter to all council Members and spoke to Peggy Henson in support of the Moratorium. There are seven gas stations/mini marts from Parkers Mill to Oliver Lewis Way and jaywalking is common on Versailles Road.



The location proposed for the gas station is an entrance to residential areas and the affected neighborhood opposes this type of development.

The second editorial deals with House Bill 72, filled recently in Frankfort. This Bill would affect Neighborhood Associations and make it even more expensive to challenge proposed development. As the President of our neighborhood association, I have written to our representatives in opposition of this bill. As with any proposed legislation anyone can write their representative and I urge you to consider sharing your opinion on this issue.

EDITORIAL

Wake up to developers' dream bill

Anyone who believes government shouldn't pick winners and losers in the economy should oppose House Bill 72.

And anyone who believes ordinary citizens should have the same right to contest real estate developments as developers have to propose them should oppose HB 72.

Finally, anyone who believes that citizens should have full, free access to the courts to resolve disputes should oppose HB 72.

HB 72, which passed out of committee Thursday, is the latest version of bills that have been kicking around the General Assembly for years to discourage people from contesting development plans they fear will harm them and their

communities. The Kentucky Resources Council, a public advocacy group that tracks legislation, calls it "a dream for developers and nightmare for neighbors."

Despite developers' hefty campaign contributions, past bills have died bipartisan deaths and that is what should happen to HB 72, sponsored by Reps. Jerry Miller, R-Louisville, and Robert Benvenuti, R-Lexington. Under the bill, those who challenge a development but lose at the circuit court level could be required to post a bond of up to \$250,000 to carry their case to the Kentucky Court of Appeals.

The circuit judge could levy the big bond if he or she thought the appeal was, in the words of the bill, "presumptively frivolous." But even if the judge found it had merit, the bond could be as high as \$100,000. That bond could be forfeited if the party appealing loses.

So, anyone challenging a development plan who

gets turned back by the first court would have to make a high-stakes bet on their chance of succeeding at the next level.

The rationale for this odd courtroom roulette is that developers should be reimbursed for costs incurred while their projects are held up in the courts.

There are a lot of problems with that rationale, not the least being that it singles out developers as a special class that needs protection.

In addition, it makes no sense. As Wikipedia explains, "Developers usually take the greatest risk in the creation or renovation of real estate — and receive the greatest rewards."

It's straight up Business 101: They take the

getting final zoning approval, even if that includes appeals through the courts, and they get the rewards. But HB 72 thinks some of those risks should be off-loaded onto anyone with the temerity to pursue a challenge after losing one round in court.

Often neighborhood associations bear the burden of challenging proposed developments that could damage both their quality of life and property values. They struggle to raise money for lawyers to plead their case before zoning boards, city councils and sometimes in court.

That's the point of this bill, to make it more expensive, so the neighborhood groups will run out of money and energy and give up.

It's a disturbing, cynical and probably unconstitutional effort to reduce risk for developers so they can gain even greater rewards. Voters should urge their representatives to turn it aside again this year.

FEB 12, 2017

4C | **Opinion**

FACEBOOK.COM/HLOPINIONS • TWITTER.COM/HL_OPINIONS