

From: J Ellinport [mailto:jeff@ellinport.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 9:23 PM
To: Timothy M. Mulford
Subject: Washingtonian Woods Architectural Guidelines

Dear Tim:

I appreciate the time and effort the Architectural Review Committee (the "Committee") devoted to this project, and I am grateful for the extended opportunity to comment.

Without addressing specifics like the unreasonableness of the \$1,000 penalty and lack of an exception for exigent circumstances (except, apparently, in the case of downed trees), I find the general level of purported oversight and control to be quite troublesome, Orwellian and, in some cases, just silly.

The Committee, the Washingtonian Woods Board of Directors (the "Board") and PMP all seem to correctly understand that the main reason for restrictive architectural covenants is to help maintain property values, and I certainly agree there must be reasonable, common sense rules in this context. However, the Architectural Guidelines for Homes and Property (the "Guidelines") dated March 10, 2015 and recently presented to the neighborhood is far too intrusive.

Dictating the use of window grids, type of garage door panels (raised v. flushed), mailbox posts, numbering, grass clippings, and edging, for example, is excessive and unnecessary. None of these elements, even if accurately and appropriately defined as an "architectural change," would adversely impact property values, curb appeal, or the character of our neighborhood.

Rather, these Guidelines create overly narrow restrictions directly tied to the 25 year old original design elements of three particular builders. Many of the restrictions are not rationally related to the maintenance of property values. The Guidelines lend far too much power and control to the Board at the expense of individual homeowners and our rights to make reasonable changes to property for which we paid significant sums of money. In this regard, the legal system has, historically, favored free use of real property and strictly construed attempts to expand restrictions on such use. This general rule also applies to restrictive covenants incorporated into residential deeds.

While all of us want to ensure our neighbors are prohibited from doing anything truly unusual or offensive, I wonder how many of us really care if our neighbors have grids in their windows, pick up (or leave) lawn clippings, or use a soft white light bulb on their back porch.

In fact, I suggest there are other issues that have a much more direct and powerful impact on home values and the appeal of our neighborhood such as crime, safety, traffic and the pending development of the Hopkins property across the street. If the concern here is truly about property values, we may want to focus on these matters and not whether there is a ½" - 1" gap between our lawns and the sidewalk.

We all deal with far too much regulation and oversight from federal, state, county and local governments. Let's not expand the current layer of self-imposed bureaucracy.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Ellinport
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