

Frequently Asked Questions

Commons Area

What should we do if a tree in the Commons blows over or loses a limb and damages our property?

Please call the Association Office immediately to report the damage. A representative will be sent to assess the situation and refer it to the Board of Directors for action.

Why can't we just go through all the woods and take down the dead trees as they die?

Because we have over 70 acres, our woods are protected by the Wayne County Forestry Act. Before any tree can be removed, even if they're obviously dead, we have to get a Township Official to come out and approve the tree to be taken down. If we take down trees that aren't approved, even if there's no mistaking that it's dead, the Association can be fined a large sum. Our maintenance manager usually walks through the areas and marks trees to be taken down at the end of the year.

Why do you leave the trees in the woods after they're taken down? It looks awful and would be much nicer if they were taken away.

It is very costly to remove dead trees. Our priority is to first remove those trees that are a threat to a Homeowner's property, then to remove the other trees. Unfortunately we do not have the budget to drag all of the dead trees out of the woods and remove them.

Why don't we keep the bushes by the stream on Hanford and on Weathersfield Way trimmed all summer?

We have many landscaped areas to work on and our budget only permits trimming once a summer.

Can the common areas be used by any resident or just those who back up to them?

Any Sunflower resident can use the parks for their enjoyment. There are public access points to every park. Do not trespass on someone else's lawn, either to get to the park, or while you're using the park. Because of costly wear and tear we do not allow organized teams to use our parks for practice games.

What is the distance around the Hanford Commons Walking Path?

The path is 4/10s of a mile (2½ times around = 1 mile).

It seems like we're the only subdivision in the area that doesn't have a playscape for residents. Why is that when there are so many children in our sub?

When Sunflower was being built, the builder didn't put any playscapes in our subdivision. With commercial playscapes costing as much as they do, we don't have the money in our operating budget to put one in. Tonda Elementary has playscapes for Kindergarteners through 5th graders. As long as school isn't in session, residents are welcome to use them.

What should we do if we see someone driving through our common areas or something else that is illegal?

Call the Township police immediately to report the incident. Please also call the office to report what happened. Without a police report, the Association cannot take any action against an individual who has done something illegal on our property.

Dues

Should we pay our dues since we are moving soon?

Please pay your dues now to avoid additional charges. When you sell your home, the Title Company that handles the closing needs to contact the Association for a Status Letter (this will tell them that your dues are paid in full through the year). The Title Company will then pro-rate the dues as of your closing date. Your closing statement will show a credit for the portion of the year that you do not own the home and the buyer's statement will show a charge for their portion. The Association does not refund any portion of the dues. If you are planning to sell your home, it would be helpful if you would let your Title Company know they need to contact the Association for a Status Letter.

Where do my dues go?

As of 1/1/2015

Annual dues received per household \$ 270.00

Annual Expenses per household

Newsletter (nearly pays for itself with advertising)	\$.24
Special events (picnic, egg hunt, garage sales)	2.91
Routine maintenance/supplies	19.01
Utilities	17.23
Snow Plowing	27.93
Insurance	14.85
Commons Areas Maintenance	29.11
SVHA Operations	66.85
Pools	56.54
Capital Reserves contribution	<u>48.37</u>

Total expenses per household \$ 283.04

Sunflower expenses exceed Homeowner dues by \$13.04 per home. Income from Clubhouse rentals, Newsletter advertising, bank interest, etc., help to offset this shortfall.

Pools

Why does the Gainsborough pool not open until 4pm when school is in session, but Hanford always opens at noon? I thought we switched off every year.

When school is in session we open the Hanford pool earlier than Gainsborough because Hanford has the kiddy pool that the toddlers use.

Why does the Hanford pool always close earlier than the Gainsborough pool at the end of the season? I thought that was switched every year?

We evaluate what guards we have left at the end of the season and which pool they have the most experience operating. Safety is our primary concern.

Why is the rule about an adult being in the water with a child under the age of 6 so strongly enforced?

We were having numerous closings due to biohazard closings. After considerable observations and discussions with other pools, the Board determined that young children left unattended in the water were the primary cause of the biohazards. When an adult was with the child in the water, they could sense when the child needed a swim break and became our best defense against biohazard incidences and by enforcement of this rule we have cut those types of incidences by 90%. We appreciate your cooperation with this effective rule.

Why is the Kiddy Pool closed during adult swim?

Adult swim is a safety break for all children. It's a time to use the bathroom, get a drink, rest, etc. To ensure that we use the break for intended reasons, we keep the kiddy pool closed. Since the kiddy pool capacity is only 10 people, we also close it as a sense of fairness.

Why can't we keep the pools open through Labor Day every year?

A lot of our lifeguards are in college and have to leave for school in mid-August. In order to handle the chlorine and other chemicals, lifeguards have to be at least 18 years old. Because we normally have only high school guards left during the last few weeks, if none of them are 18, there is no one who can handle the chemicals.

Could we just keep the pools open through Labor Day if we posted a "NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY, SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK" sign?

No. State law requires us to have at least 2 lifeguards on duty when the pools are open due to the size of the pools.

Why can't we wear t-shirts or shorts over our bathing suit while swimming?

The state health code states that only swim apparel can be worn in the pool for sanitary reasons.

I don't use the pool. Why should I have to pay for it?

The pools are only one of the many features that Sunflower offers. The parks, tennis courts, basketball court, two Clubhouses, subdivision picnic, and snow removal are all part of the services that we offer. These amenities make Sunflower Village a more desirable community in which to live, and are a benefit to all of us.

If my son/daughter wants to be a lifeguard at Sunflower, what should they do?

Have them obtain an employment application from the Sunflower office, and return the completed application to the office between January and March. All applicants must be Red Cross certified and have CPR training to be a lifeguard here.

Government

How can the subdivision rules or By-laws be changed?

The Association operates under Articles of Incorporation, By-laws and Covenants & Restrictions. The Articles of Incorporation and By-laws may be changed at any meeting of the Association as long as an advance notice of the intended amendment has been published to all Homeowners at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. A quorum for any meeting is 15 Homeowners. The By-laws & Articles of Incorporation may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of all members present (10 owners). Amending the Covenants and Restrictions is much more involved. Amending the C&R's requires 2/3 of all owners (1128 out of 1683) to sign a document of change. Each Homeowner must prove that they are the owner of record by presenting their deed at the time of signing. Both husband and wife must sign and signatures must be notarized. The document of change must then be recorded with Wayne County Register of Deeds. The change would not take effect for three years.

Why doesn't the Board crack down on homes that are in a state of disrepair?

When the builder drew up the Covenants and Restrictions he did not give the Board the authority to do that. The Township ordinances cover these issues and they have authority to enforce them.

You can call 734 394-5400 to report an ordinance violation. Here are some popular ordinances for residential homes:

- Grass must be less than 6" high
- Tree branches must be at least 7 feet off the ground over the street or sidewalk
- Homes must have clearly marked address numbers
- The exterior of your house must be maintained so as not to have peeling, broken, loose, rotten, crumbling, missing, or inadequate finished materials (i.e. peeling paint, broken shutters, loose gutters, downspouts, etc.)
- Temporary parking of campers/recreational vehicles may be in your driveway for no more than 48 hours prior to and 48 hours after the use of the vehicle within a 7 day period
- All pets must be kept on a leash at all times (this includes our commons areas) and all fecal matter must be disposed of by the owner on the owners property (not in trash cans in our commons areas)
- Any trash/trash cans have to be stored out of view (can't be stored on the side of the home unless they're in an enclosed area)
- Trash can't be put out until 6pm the day before trash pickup
- During the winter months, residential sidewalks must be cleared of ice and snow within 72 hours of a snowfall

What is the difference between our Operating Budget and our Capital Reserve Account?

While the Operating Budget covers our day-to-day expenses, our Reserve Account can be considered a savings account. This savings account is used to fund long term actions and major repairs. SVHA is a not-for-profit organization, and, as such, we are expected to spend every dollar we take in each year. However, the IRS allows us to save money to plan for future repairs to our property and structures (Clubhouses, pools, walking paths, parking lots, tennis courts, and basketball court). In order to know how much we need to be saving every year, and to satisfy the IRS that we should be saving money, a group of qualified engineers conducts a survey of our neighborhood every 3-4 years. They evaluate all of our structures and estimate when items will need to be fixed and how much it will cost at that time. Based on this evaluation, they can tell us how much we need to save to ensure we have the funds available when these items need to be fixed. With this information in hand, we set aside a portion of our annual Homeowners' dues into the Reserve to save for the repairs. It should be noted that once any money is deposited into our Reserve Account, that money can ONLY be spent on the repairs specified by the engineers. If we were to spend it on our normal operating expenses, the IRS could assess significant penalties against us. Over the last few years some major improvements were completed at both Clubhouses. The repairs were funded out of the SVHA Reserve Account. Just as described above, a survey was completed several years back indicating the need for major repairs. Since then, we have been saving to be able to pay for these actions. The Board does have the option of not depositing the full amount specified. However, depositing less than what the engineers recommend can hurt you in the future. For example we have had to spend a large amount of money for permanent fixes on our Clubhouses in the last 3-4 years. Those repairs should have been made long ago, but because previous Boards did not have the money in the Reserve Account to properly fix the problems at the time, we had to spend more money later as the buildings deteriorated further. We do not want this to happen again.

Publications

Why weren't our names in the Sunflower Directory?

Your name is included if you check the appropriate box on the yearly registration form sent out with the dues notice. If you are a new Homeowner and you want to be in the next Directory, call the office or complete the "Just Moved In" form on this website to let us know. We do not list new Homeowners automatically—you have to tell us if you want to be listed. We do not list children's names/phone numbers or e-mail addresses.

Why do we publish the newsletter so often when it seems like information is repeating itself?

Our By-laws state that we have to publish the newsletter at least four times a year. Because of activities going on throughout the year, publishing them every other month works best. Because we get income from advertisers the newsletter either pays for itself or costs very little.

Repairs

A storm sewer broke in my backyard. The Township says they won't repair it, what do I do?

The Township no longer accepts responsibility for repairing the storm sewers that run behind our homes. According to our C&R's our attorney advised us that if a storm sewer is located in the Associations' common area, the Association will pay for the repair. If the storm sewer is located on Homeowner's property the Homeowner has to pay for the repair. If the storm sewer runs along numerous properties, the Association will assist in getting you the names/phone numbers of everyone effected so you can work towards getting the bill paid fairly by all homes affected.

Who do I contact if the street in front of my house is in need of repair?

Wayne County owns the roads in our subdivision; however, currently Wayne County does not have a street repair program for subdivisions with county roads. If they receive a complaint, Wayne County will investigate. Call the Wayne County Traffic Division at 734 955-2158.

Signs and Street Lights

Why doesn't our subdivision have signs saying we're Sunflower?

The builder didn't put them in when the subdivision was being built. To put them in, the cost would have to come out of our operating budget, not from the Reserve Account. But, in addition to that problem, we have an issue as to where to place them. Not only do we have many entrances to the subdivision, but we do not own the easements where the signs would have to be placed.

Why don't we have street lights like other subdivisions do?

The builder didn't have them installed when our subdivision was built. To run electrical lines would be too costly. In addition, we don't own the easements where the lights would need to be placed.

Events

Why don't we charge residents for food during our annual picnic to make up for the cost?

In order to charge people for food, we'd need to buy a special permit to do so. We don't need a permit to offer free food.