

## *About Cooke's Hope*

The goal of the Cooke's Hope development team has always been to create a Cooke's Hope Community, not just a group of residences. Our expectation for that community has been, first and foremost, that it be one in which we would all like to live.

In pursuit of that goal, we have endeavored to design a number of different living venues to meet the residential needs of the broad spectrum of residents. We have also worked to locate these residential clusters in ways that preserve, as well as utilize, the rural, bucolic nature of this wonderful site.

To that end, we have developed a palette of architectural styles and streetscapes. Within a range of options wide enough to encourage a sense of vitality, we think that the maintenance of these defined standards of compatibility is important to the successful achievement of the feeling of community we deem so important. As a result, we are not always able to accommodate every resident's wishes with regard to exterior style or placement. We hope that each Cooke's Hope homeowner will understand the central principles that motivate our efforts in this regard and will agree with us that we owe every resident a responsibility to maintain these broad measures of community compatibility to the best of our ability.

Cooke's Hope consists of approximately 450 acres of land, defined on the North by the Oxford Road, and on the West by Peachblossom Creek. Our development plan for that area has been, by necessity, quite flexible and dynamic through the course of the development process. Much of that flexibility has been required because of uncertainty regarding the impact on development options of an ever-changing regulatory regime associated with land use falling within the defined Critical Area around the Chesapeake Bay and Non-Tidal Wetland zones that are both significantly represented on this parcel. While this necessarily flexible development plan has permitted us to achieve what we feel is the best possible result consistent with our initial development goals, it has made it impossible for us to provide detailed commitments regarding the specific future utilization of our entire parcel.

The Cooke's Hope community is intended to incorporate large areas of open space and a number of open space related amenities and improvements. This plan, and the consequential perpetual responsibilities associated with its implementation, has necessitated the establishment of a homeowners association. In conjunction with the developer, that association will eventually bear the community responsibility to maintain these common areas and facilities for the benefit of all of our residents. These common areas consist of the following:

1. All roads and streets, including road shoulders, and associated sidewalks.
2. Tennis Facilities
3. Fitness Center
4. Picnic Pavilion near wildlife habitat
5. Community dock, parking and surrounding area
6. Village Park at Outram and School House #2 Lane
7. Ponds
8. Dog Park
9. Five miles of walking trails

Our current development plan contemplates deed restriction on large portions of the undeveloped property perpetuating those areas for use as open space. The association has been designed to function as the repository for those parcels when, and in the event that, those contemplated deed restrictions are implemented.

The association is funded in an amount sufficient to cover common area maintenance expense, by the assessment of annual dues, payable by each property owner in Cooke's Hope. Annual homeowner dues are computed to cover expenses necessary to maintain the common areas, garbage collection and the administrative costs of the association.

Some property owners have asked why some required maintenance, such as easement bed maintenance and fertilization and herbicide/pesticide treatment, is not covered under the annual homeowner's dues regime. While common area maintenance is fairly allocated among residents on a one-home, one-share basis, the time and materials necessary to perform services, like Village front yard maintenance, vary depending on lot size, improvements and landscape plan. It would not be fair to allocate all such maintenance expenses among residents in equal shares. The cost variations for easement area grass cutting in the Village, Hedges and Galloways, which is performed by the association's approved contractor, results in an extra required maintenance fee expense for those residents based on yard size. Additionally, the other Village, Hedges and Galloways easement area services are performed by outside contractors (i.e. fertilization and pest control), who provide annual services quotations on a yard-by-yard basis. As such, we feel those expenses should be passed through at differentiated cost and not lumped into everyone's dues as a shared homeowner's expense. Yard maintenance outside the easement area is the responsibility of each homeowner.

## **COMMON AREA AND OTHER FACILITIES**

### **Boat Slips**

Legally, the boat dock and surrounding property are part of the common area and are owned, controlled and maintained by the Homeowners Association. However, in order that users of the boat dock should bear the burden of maintenance and repair, the association charges an annual fee for rental of a boat slip. The fee, which will be established and published per year by November 1 for the next calendar year, is not prorated. Only Springfield property owners and slip holders for the current year will be automatically notified of the next year's annual fee and provided with a slip renewal application. Other residents interested in renting a boat slip should call the Property Manager's office to be placed on the waiting list.

It is noted that, as a legal condition for permission to construct a common dock, Springfield residents are granted first choice to rent a boat slip for the following calendar year. Should any boat slips remain available after Springfield residents have had the opportunity to rent a boat slip, such slips will be offered first to other residents renewing a prior year's lease and then to residents on the waiting list. However, the specific procedure for assigning boat slips may be obtained from the Property Manager's office or viewed on the Cooke's Hope Homeowners Association website at [www.cookeshope.org](http://www.cookeshope.org).

### **Walking Trails**

The walking trails are provided for the quiet enjoyment of our residents and are not intended for cars, motorcycles or other gasoline propelled vehicles. Bicycles and electric powered vehicles are

permitted. We urge courtesy to our walking users. Extreme caution should be exercised since these trails were designed for walkers not high speed wheeled vehicle use.

### **Tennis Court**

The tennis court is available for use by any of our residents and their guests. We require proper tennis attire and that special care is taken that all players wear proper tennis shoes that will not damage or mar the court surface. To facilitate convenient use, a court reservation sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board outside the post office.

### **Fitness Center**

The fitness center is available for use by any resident subject to an annual membership fee. Information on membership can be obtained by calling the Property Manager at 410.690.4336. The Fitness Center offers cardiovascular, free weight and weight machine areas. Current Rules of Operation are available by picking up a flier at the Fitness Center.

### **Picnic Area/Entertainment Pavilion**

Anyone who wishes to use this facility must make a reservation by contacting the Cooke's Hope Office at 410-822-1335. Please let us know when making your reservation whether you will need grills or other amenities set up for your event. There will be a fee for set-up and clean-up.

## **YARD MAINTENANCE**

### **The Village & Hedges**

In order to maintain the beauty and sense of community of our neighborhoods, maintenance of the front yard easement area of all Village parcels is required to be performed by our maintenance staff or an approved sub-contractor. The easement area is defined by the area from the street to an imaginary line along the front of the residence (excluding porches) extending to the two lot sidelines. On a corner lot, the easement area also includes the area between the street and an imaginary line drawn along the side of the residence or fence. Alleys are not considered streets for the purposes of defining corner lots. Easement areas are more completely defined in the covenant materials associated with your deed to the property. Should a tree die in the easement area, the association will be responsible for replacing the dead tree. Street Trees in the Village (not Hedges, Galloways or Springfield) are defined as trees planted within 6' of the back of curbing or edge of pavement where no curb exists. They are/were planted by the Developer or Homeowners Association (HOA), and replacements are consistent with the originals in species and specific variety on each particular street. The HOA is responsible for the selection, installation and cost of new street trees.

Watering of the tree is the responsibility of the property owner. All other routine maintenance of the tree is provided through the homeowner's Front Yard Easement Area maintenance contract, to include spraying for pests and disease, application of fertilizer, mulching, weeding and minor pruning.

## **Galloways**

Grass cutting, tree and flower bed maintenance, fertilization of grass and plants, as well as pest and disease control are required to be performed by our approved sub-contractors. These services will be billed to each homeowner pursuant to an annual quotation based on an estimate of labor and material costs. Back and side yard maintenance is the responsibility of each homeowner.

## **Springfield**

Springfield homeowners are responsible for all aspects of yard maintenance on their properties. Questions and concerns regarding snow removal should be directed to the Property Manager prior to the winter season.

## **ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW**

All exterior improvements and changes at Cooke's Hope (including Village, Hedges, Galloways and Springfield homes) need to be approved by the Architectural & Environmental Review Committee (AERC). No AERC approval is needed for interior improvements or changes. This process is not complicated. If you contemplate a change or addition to your property, please submit your plans to the AERC as follows:

1. Submit detailed plans and completed AERC Request Form to Darlene Debnam either via email at [propertymanager@cookeshope.org](mailto:propertymanager@cookeshope.org) or drop in the Property Manager's Drop Box in the Post Office Building. Please submit any visual aids, literature, etc. to assist in your request, and in the case of additions, your site plan elevation.
2. Your request will be logged, date-stamped and sent to the Chairman of the AERC.
3. The AERC will discuss and decide approval/disapproval.
4. A letter will be sent to you regarding the Committee decision. You should receive the decision within approximately two weeks. However, if a final decision has not been made within two weeks, a status report will be given to the lot owner.
5. Any Town of Easton permits that may be required for interior or exterior changes must be obtained by the Homeowner.

No exterior changes to any residence may be undertaken without the prior written approval of this Committee. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Color (doors, siding, trim and fencing)
2. Additions, modifications or replacement of any windows or exterior doors
3. Addition or exterior change to any outbuilding or general landscape plan
4. Addition of any new outbuilding, shed, playground, recreation or other permanent (or non-permanent) equipment
5. Fences and/or screening
6. Pool – Above ground pools are NOT allowed
7. Shutters
8. Awnings and/or Exterior Blinds
9. Satellite Dish
10. Lightning rods, weather vanes or attic fans
11. Window boxes
12. Solar Panels or Collectors
13. Walkways and driveways

All approved improvements are to commence within six (6) months of approval and shall be substantially completed within twelve (12) months following the date of commencement, or within the time frame specified by the Committee in its approval as per the First Amended Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, page 16, item 4, Limitations.

If your request is denied, you may appeal the decision of the AERC to the Board of Directors and, upon your request, shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board.

### **ASSOCIATION DUES AND BILLING**

Cooke's Hope Homeowners Association dues are collected annually in advance. Our fiscal year begins January 1 and dues will be billed and payable by the end of January. Homeowners can arrange to have their dues paid quarterly by automatic deduction from their bank account. Such payments will be debited January 5, April 5, July 5 and October 5. If you would like to participate in the quarterly payment plan, please contact the Property Manager for details and to arrange the necessary bank authorization forms.

### **COOKE'S HOPE COLLECTION POLICY**

All bills for dues, special assessments and yard maintenance fees will be sent out at least 30 days before the due date. The due date will be stated on the bill.

Bills for all other services provided by the Association, such as Handyman Services and additional garden services, are due 30 days from the day rendered. The due date will be stated on the bill.

Accounts unpaid for 30 days after the due date are delinquent, and

- the account will automatically be charged a one-time collection service fee of \$50; and
- the account will automatically bear interest at the rate of 1.5% per month (18% per year) on the unpaid balance from the due date until paid; and
- a reminder invoice showing these additional charges will be sent.

Accounts in arrears for 60 days will receive a letter from the association stating that, if not paid within the next 30 days, an action to place a lien on the property for the unpaid balance will be filed with the appropriate court. Any additional costs will be added to the amount due and the property may be sold at public auction to pay the debt.

When an account is unpaid for 90 days, the Property Manager will notify the Association attorney to initiate action for collection.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

This policy establishes the eligibility for members of the Board of Directors and sets forth additional guidelines relating to this matter:

### **Eligibility for Board of Directors:**

1. The By-Laws state that a majority of the Board members must be members of the Association and a majority of whom shall maintain their principal residence in the Cooke's Hope Community.
2. It is preferred that all members of the Board should be resident property owners.
3. In the event sufficient candidates cannot be found among resident property owners, selection from non-resident property owners may be allowed at the discretion of the Board.
4. In the event suitable candidates cannot be found as per items #2 and #3, the Board may select non-resident, non-property owners as candidate(s).

### **Establishment of a Nominating Committee:**

1. The Board of Directors hereby establishes a Nominating Committee. The purpose of said Committee is to provide names of eligible persons for election to vacant Board seats.
2. Nominating Committee will be comprised of one member of the Board of Directors and one resident of each jurisdiction affected by a Board vacancy.
3. Nominations will be made on or about August 1 of each calendar year.

### **Deadline for Filing for Vacant Board Seat:**

1. The initial mailing soliciting candidates for Board of Directors vacancies will be sent on or about August 1 of each calendar year.
2. The deadline for filing will be placed at three weeks from the date of above-noted mailing.
3. If a candidate withdraws within one week of the deadline, the deadline will be extended an additional two weeks.

### **Voting Guidelines:**

1. Secret ballots shall be cast for each Board seat. Lot numbers will be placed on the ballot, however, to ensure proper tracking of number of votes cast.
2. All votes will be counted by a group of three (3) Inspectors of Election. Process will be overseen by the Property Manager.

## **FRONT EASEMENT POLICY (ORNAMENTATION)**

Ornamentation and decorative items (such as, but not limited to, ceramic figurines, statuary, gazing balls or other adornments) that are visible within the front yard easement are not permitted without prior written approval from the AERC.

## **HANDYMAN SERVICES**

All job requests for residents' maintenance services, as well as non-recurring handyman job requests, are scheduled through the Cooke's Hope Property Manager or Stuart Hartmeyer, 516-655-5317 or [hartmeyer@aol.com](mailto:hartmeyer@aol.com) for scheduling and rates.

## **LANDSCAPE INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE POLICY**

The Board of Directors approved a Landscape Installation and Maintenance Policy for all homeowners and contractors. This policy is available on the website ([www.cookeshope.org](http://www.cookeshope.org)) or by contacting the Property Manager for a copy.

## **MAIL & MAIL BOXES**

Curbside mailboxes are located only in the Springfield section of Cooke's Hope. Springfield residents are responsible for mailbox installation and maintenance. These mailboxes must conform to our standard design. If you live in Springfield and want detailed information with regard to this, please contact the Property Manager's Office.

The mailroom, which is located next to the tennis court, contains postal boxes which are provided free of charge to Village, Hedges and Galloways residents. Please check with the Property Manager so that we can assign a box and provide keys to you.

## **COOKE'S HOPE ORIENTATION**

The Homeowners Association provides a comprehensive orientation for all new residents. Homeowners planning to rent their property and their tenants are required to attend one of these orientation sessions. (See minutes of the annual Homeowners Association meeting of May 2004.) A charge of \$250, payable to the association, is required for all rental properties. Included in this charge is provision of all of the written materials and directories made available by the association to residents of the Community. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to notify any prospective purchaser or tenant of these orientation requirements.

## **PARKING**

Residents are required to park their personal vehicles in their garage or driveway. Street parking is reserved for guests only. For health and safety reasons required by the Fire Marshall, there can be no parking in the cul-de-sac turnarounds or alleyways other than on garage aprons.

Trucks and other commercial vehicles (vehicles with logos), lawnmowers, off road vehicles, boats and RVs must be parked in your garage or some other approved structure.

We request that residents do not park along the shoulders of Cooke's Hope Road. Parking there damages the edges of the paved surfaces of the road increasing association road maintenance expense. In addition, repairing the ruts left by vehicle tires on the soft shoulders is very expensive.

## **PET ETIQUETTE**

As almost all of Cooke's Hope is within the Easton city limits, we are subject to the town's leash law. Therefore, pets shall not roam at large. Additionally, please be courteous and clean up after your pet. If you place your pet's waste in a plastic bag, please dispose of it properly. Do not put the bags down the storm drains as anything deposited there will flow into our ponds and, eventually, find its way to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Courtesy of the developer, a dog park is located on Old Pasture Drive for use by residents. The developer maintains this area for the enjoyment of our four-legged residents and their accompanying guardians.

Please be mindful as to your dog's barking. Domestic pets should not be a source of annoyance or nuisance to the neighborhood.

The Board of Directors issued a policy regarding pet complaints and issues. The policy is as follows:

Any persons threatened by a potentially dangerous situation with regard to a pet should find out the name of the pet owner and speak with them regarding the situation. If the situation is not corrected, please report the incident to the Humane Society (410-822-0107) as soon as possible.

Any persons affected by a nuisance situation with regard to a pet, should find out the name of the pet owner and speak with them regarding the situation. If the situation is not corrected, please report the incident to the Easton Police Department non-emergency number (410-822-1111).

### **PROHIBITION OF WOOD BURNING OUTDOOR FIREPLACES & FIREPITS**

Outdoor fireplaces have become an attractive amenity for entertaining on cool autumn nights. These fireplaces/pits are often used for a few hours at a time and, unfortunately, when neighbors' windows are likely to be open. Because the chimneys on these outdoor fireplaces are not as tall as those on a house, smoke is not released high enough to remain a neighbor-friendly condition. Therefore, we have prohibited all wood burning outdoor fireplaces in the Village, Hedges and the Galloways. Any outdoor fireplaces or fire pits in those locations must use natural gas or propane. Springfield residents are exempt from this prohibition.

### **RENTAL PROPERTIES**

All homeowners who are renting their homes in Cooke's Hope are required to register their tenant(s) with the association. A \$250 orientation fee is also required payable by the homeowner. If your rental property falls within the Easton town limits, you should make application for a license from the Town of Easton. A copy of the rental lease agreement must be provided to the Property Manager.

### **SIGNAGE**

The association has instituted a policy that dictates mandatory design standards for all signs erected on any homeowner's property. Any question regarding these standards, which will be strictly enforced, should be addressed to the Cooke's Hope Architectural Committee. The design standards and signage rules are as follows:

1. No more than one sign will be permitted on any property.
2. Signs are to be white with black lettering.

3. All signs are to be 12 inches by 12 inches and mounted on a single 2 inch by 2 inch post and painted white with black lettering. The signs may have a black, blue or red border.
4. Signs may not incorporate information tubes or other communications boxes.
5. Signs are to be placed in the front gardens in the Village, Hedges and the Galloways or at the edge of the property near the road in Springfield.
6. Contractor identification signs and for sale signs must be removed immediately after work is complete or the property is under contract.
7. No signs may be erected on common area property without the express permission of the Cooke's Hope Office. This includes Open House and other real estate sales related signage in the area along the Oxford Road at the entrance to Cooke's Hope or at any of the street/road intersections in the Community. Our policy allows for the usage of the Cooke's Hope generic open house sandwich style sign to be placed at the entrance to the Community for the duration of the open house and removed immediately thereafter. Please contact the Property Manager to make arrangements to use this sign. Directional signs with real estate company logos may be placed at the intersection of streets and roads. However, refrain from using balloons on these signs. Again, these are to be removed immediately following the open house.
8. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to advise their real estate agent of these rules.

## **STANDING RULES**

1. All actions taken by this Board are governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR). In those cases in which the bylaws or other governing documents, including this standing rule, refer to "Robert's Rules of Order," the book will be subordinate to other rules, including (in descending order of authority as applicable) law, corporate charter, constitution and/or bylaws, special rules of order and then Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. Standing rules and, finally, custom have the least authority.

2. A closed Board meeting may be called under the authority of the Maryland Homeowner's Association Act. We are hereby amending Robert's Rules of Order, concerning the minutes of these meetings, so that the minutes may be distributed electronically to all participating members (those who have not recused themselves or been recused) for review, modification and approval. With unanimous approval of the participating members, copies of the minutes may be distributed to non-Board members. All other provisions of RONR continue to apply.

3. It is the intent of this Board to conduct our monthly meetings with civility and proper decorum. This is a meeting of the Board, not a Homeowner's meeting. It is, however, open to all association members. And there will be an agenda item, each meeting, for members to express themselves. We support the use of RONR to insure that these meetings are conducted with the above intent. Specifically, the chair has our authority to remind people when they are straying from our intended conduct, to warn them of the consequences should their conduct continue and to order them removed from the meeting, if necessary.

Board approved 8/2014

## **SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

If you see unruly or suspicious activity, you should write down a description of the perpetrators and/or their cars or bikes, license plate number and, if possible, take a digital photograph. Suspicious, unruly, illegal or criminal activity should be reported to the non-emergency number of the Easton Police Department at 410-822-1111. If you live in Springfield, such activity should be reported to the Talbot County Sheriff's Department at 410-822-1020.

## **TRASH COLLECTION**

Curbside trash collection is a service provided by the association for all residents of Cooke's Hope (Galloways, Hedges, Springfield and Village). Trash is picked up after 8:00 a.m. on Monday mornings unless trash day falls on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving or Christmas. If trash day falls on one of these holidays, the trash will be picked up the following day.

Trash is collected on an open truck so all trash must be bagged in sturdy plastic bags and securely tied. No trash is to be left curbside other than after sunset on the day before trash day. Trash collection is intended for household trash only. If you have bulk trash or large amounts of yard waste, please contact Stuart Hartmeyer, 516.655.5317 or [hartmeyer@aol.com](mailto:hartmeyer@aol.com) to arrange for this pick-up through the Handyman Services.

Curbside recycling is available through the HOA and is paid for through the Annual Dues. Roll-out containers are provided to all Homeowners who chose to participate in this service. It is a stream-line recycling program, so sorting is not necessary, and liners for the cans are also not necessary. Pick up days are every other Monday (mornings) and a calendar of pick-up days is available on the website. Please contact the Property Manager if you need a recycling bin.

## **WEBSITES**

Cookeshope.org is the website available to homeowners. You may access this site in order to keep up-to-date on current issues as well as reference material, social events and much more. Certain areas of the website are password protected, including this Directory and all financial reports. For non-residents, a nice tour of the community is available on [cookeshope.com](http://cookeshope.com).

## **YARD SALES**

There are no yard sales allowed in Cooke's Hope. If a homeowner wants to have a sale inside their home and/or closed garage, there is no objection. However, no signs will be allowed and no display of items for sale outside of the home is permitted.