

# St. Charles Hills Subdivision

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Greetings and Salutations from the St. Charles Hills Trustees! For those of you who are new to the subdivision, welcome! We are glad you are here. For those who have lived here for many years, thank you for making this your community of choice.

By receipt of this letter you will notice we have hired a new management company to conduct subdivision business. We parted ways with City and Village in an effort to reduce costs and improve customer service. Last year the trustees attended a subdivision trade show and interviewed several management companies. We settled on Sterling Management Services because they offered a competitive rate and a cheerfully hopeful approach.

## Trash Services

There was a conversation at the subdivision meeting last year about waste removal services in the subdivision. Some residents noted the near constant traffic, noise and commotion due to numerous companies removing trash. We have also received numerous comments on our Nextdoor social media page about rate disparity. The trustees contacted a number of waste removal service companies and asked for a competitive subdivision rate. Republic Services was the only company courteous enough to negotiate with us. We have a signed contract and fixed rate for the next three years that includes:

- Trash 1 time per week (includes cart) \$11.02 per month. A second trash cart is an additional \$5 per month.
- Recycling 1 time per week (includes cart) \$7.96 per month.
- Yard waste 1 time per week is \$9.24 per month (the customer must enroll for 3 consecutive months. (cart available for \$3.00 per month).
- Annual increase of no more than 3%
- Two free bulk items picked up at no charge per month. \$11.50 per item thereafter.

If the homeowner is currently using Republic Services, you may call their office to get this rate. We strongly encourage our neighbors to consider making the switch. We realize we asked our neighbors to move to Aspen a few years ago but they are no longer meeting the needs of the subdivision and have not been competitive with their pricing overall.

## Common Grounds

The trustees designed and purchased new park signs for our common ground areas. Please look for those go up when weather is nicer.

The trustees worked with one of our neighbors to remove dangerous playground equipment at a very low cost. We are also looking at new playground equipment and trying to get reasonable bids. Our bigger concern, however, is the collapse of several sewer pipes at the Ipswich and Lyme common grounds. We are currently considering a very reasonable bid of \$66,702.00 for repairs. This is more than our annual assessment covers in total and we will need to determine how best to recoup this cost as the work must be done. We are very concerned about the sinkholes that have developed in our aging system that cause potential risk to our residents. These are not the only sinkholes that have developed but they are the most pressing issue at this time. Please feel free to visit these common ground areas to survey for yourself. Just don't fall in!

The trustees continue to be concerned about dumping in our common ground areas. The accumulation of trash and debris is disturbing. Please do not dump waste in our common grounds. If you see someone dumping, please contact the trustees so we address the situation. This includes yard waste. Since everyone in the subdivision pays to have this trash removed, it would be wise to eliminate this expense. Also, please know this is a prosecutable offense. If you see nefarious activity, please contact the St. Charles County Police.

We would like to schedule several park clean-up days again this year. Please call or email us to volunteer. A big deterrent to crime would be the focused removal of brush around the creeks. A lot of volunteers will minimize the

amount of elbow grease. Let's make our community stronger by bonding together toward a common goal.

### **Neighborhood Watch**

The Trustees held several neighborhood watch meetings in 2018 and are interested in scheduling more in 2019. We conducted training in coordination with St. Charles County Police at their new facility in O'Fallon. It was impressive! We held one subsequent meeting with very low attendance. The trustees strongly believe more focused participation would facilitate a safer neighborhood. We will purchase new signs to distribute in the subdivision and would like to invite you to contact us to get on our email distribution list. Stay tuned for announcements for upcoming meetings.

### **Delinquent Dues**

The trustees have been actively pursuing homeowners who refuse to pay their subdivision dues. This collection process will ramp up with our new management company. Please note that St. Charles Hills Subdivision is a legal entity and the very low annual rate of \$50 helps pay for electricity for our street lights, maintenance for our common grounds, signage, liability insurance and garage sale notices. Please keep in mind that the subdivision trustees are not paid and do not profit from the work they do to serve the community. We do this work because we care deeply about the people who live in our neighborhood and we seek to improve their lives. \$50 a year is roughly \$4.17 a month and will ensure we are able to maintain our beautiful subdivision.

### **New Indentures for St. Charles Hills**

The trustees conducted a meeting last year to discuss the revision of our current indentures. The trustees compiled suggestions and have created a new draft of the indentures. We plan to mail this out to our residents and hold another meeting to vote on them. We wholeheartedly want the new indentures to pass. They have not been revised since the formation of the subdivision and include many archaic regulations that we would like to relax. The biggest controversy in the indentures is the prohibition on privacy fences. Many of our residents want to put up privacy fences. We have spent considerable time (nights and weekends) working on this and hope we can all come to agreement and pass the new draft. You can find a copy of the draft indentures on our website.

### **Gardening Group & Social Activities Committee**

We have had several residents express interest in participating in subdivision block parties. Community is made stronger and safer when neighbors know each other. Please contact the trustees if you are interested in participating or organizing. We also would like to start a gardening group. We need fresh ideas and someone to organize this so we can beautify our common ground areas. We had several conversations last year but no real action plan. We need your help!

Please stay tuned for upcoming subdivision meetings. We are sincerely proud of our subdivision and plan to maintain and beautify it to the best of our abilities.

### **Subdivision Garage Sales & Yard of the Month**

Our subdivision garage sales will take place on May 11<sup>th</sup> and October 12<sup>th</sup>. We will also continue to take nominations for Yard of the Month and winners will have a sign placed in their yard during the months of May through October.

### **Responsible Pet Ownership**

We have received numerous complaints over the past year about barking dogs, loose dogs, and neighbors who do not clean up after their pets. If you have a dog, please clean up their waste weekly so your yard does not become a nuisance to your neighbors. Also, please do not dump pet waste in the common grounds.

### **Vehicles & Trailers**

There are specific rules around derelict vehicles, work trucks, trailers and boats. St. Charles County enforcement conducts periodic assessment of properties in our subdivision and you may receive notice from them to comply with regulations. If you have questions, please see their website: <https://www.sccmo.org/234/Property-Maintenance-Code>.

### **Looking to make a little money?**

We have many elderly or homebound neighbors who need younger people to help shovel driveways, cut grass or do

miscellaneous chores. Please contact the trustees if you are interested in being connected with someone in need.

Yours respectfully, The Trustees of St. Charles Hills