

General House and Lot Maintenance Expectations

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www.TheParksatMillCreek.com

Questions are welcomed:
TheParksACC@msn.com

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History

Well, we've all heard the horror stories of HOA's going overboard in their governance of neighborhoods, the power hungry boards, the unreasonable rules, the excessive fines and the like. Regardless of your views of HOA's in general, or even ours in particular, we have been fortunate to have a history of a few good volunteers providing stewardship to our association in a good faith effort to be reasonably un-intrusive and fiscally responsible. This along with all members having signed the Planned Unit Development Rider agreeing to follow the HOA rules when purchasing our homes is the perfect combination to continue to keep The Parks a top development in Mill Creek. Doing our part, both individually and collectively, is what makes our neighborhood so desirable.

To facilitate the consistent application of the rules for the aesthetics of the neighborhood and enjoyment of all residents the HOA established the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) in 2003. The role of the ACC is to, both, insure that homeowner projects conform to the associations documented specifications to support the community's aesthetics and to enforce compliance to rules affecting aesthetics and resident enjoyment of the neighborhood. Having been at this for many years the ACC has developed processes and an approach that is fair, consistent and respectful. The ACC philosophy is to assume that homeowners are aware of and understand the rules of the HOA and offer education as requested and reminders as necessary. It is understood that sometimes there may be extenuating circumstances that may have caused an owner to lapse in their normal degree of care. It is only asked that any non-compliance issue be addressed once brought to the attention of the homeowner. Cooperation is vastly preferred over fines. Fines are a last resort and fortunately seldom needed. This moderated approach is also extended by the Board of Directors.

Because the ACC does not police the neighborhood for non-compliances, but instead takes referrals for investigation, and because the neighborhood has reached the age where some less routine maintenance is needed the Board of Directors established the Beautification Committee in 2012. This committee is once again made up of The Parks residents willing to volunteer to conduct periodic reviews of all 254 lots in neighborhood so that reminders can be given to the residents on a consistent and more global basis than can be done by the ACC processes. The Beautification Committee is a key resource in maintaining the consistent neighborhood aesthetics. Their notifications are friendly reminders to homeowners. If you receive one please accept it in that spirit. Only if not responded to in a satisfactory manner, will the subject issues be referred to the ACC for investigation. The key is two-way communication.

The Rules

All developments in the City of Mill Creek are required to have an active Homeowners Association. And some might be surprised to know that most of our HOA's rules are restatements of city code. The rules are not difficult to comply with nor do they impose unreasonable restrictions. The rules most often associated with the aesthetics and enjoyment of the neighborhood can found in the "[Architectural Control Committee Guidelines](#)" document on our HOA's website.

General Expectations of Homeowners

There is an atmosphere of pride of ownership in The Parks and all that the community asks is that everyone maintains their property with their natural spirit of pride.

[Projects](#)

All projects affecting the exterior of the house and yards will require ACC approval with very few exceptions (noted in the ACC Guidelines). Yes, even for something like re-painting your house the same color. It is your responsibility to understand the requirements and application process and to submit an application for any project. Use the ACC as a resource and ask any questions you may have on just about anything regarding the HOA.

[House and Roof](#)

Keep the exterior of your house clean, painted and in good repair. Many homes have never been painted since built and are in serious need of a good paint job. Paint jobs generally only last 7 to 10 years. Keeping up with your paint can reap benefits in minimizing other house maintenance due to weather damage. Keep your roof moss and mildew free. Roofs take a beating from the elements and are a major factor in curb appeal. Most need a good cleaning and some maintenance every few years.

[Driveways and Sidewalks](#)

Concrete areas in front of our homes are large areas and another major factor in curb appeal. Some are prone to moss and algae and all collect dirt and mildew. Within a few years they can become darker and darker. This does not look good from a neighborhood standpoint. A good cleaning every couple of years will help make you property pop. Be sure any cleaners you might use are environmentally friendly to the surrounding waterways that our storm drain system flows into. Once you see what a difference a good cleaning makes you might take another look at your backyard concrete patio.

[Landscaping](#)

Yardwork can either be a joy or a pain. Either way, in our wet environment, where everything that you don't want to grow grows everywhere, it is a chore and requires regular attention. Keep planting beds free of weeds and moss. Mulching every couple of years can help this. Keep lawns free of weeds and moss. Anything not lawn turf in your lawn is considered a weed, even clover. Lawns are surprisingly tough to maintain here. Poor soil and the fact that cool season grasses want to go dormant in the winter and summer can be an issue. During the summer it is expected that lawns will be kept green by adequate watering. Nothing short of a mandatory water conservation notice issued by the local water authority will excuse a brown lawn. (For more information on lawn maintenance see the "[Lawn Maintenance Tips](#)" pamphlet on the HOA website.) Keep your shrubs and trees properly pruned. If you have a tree on your lot (not a street tree) and it overhangs the sidewalk make sure there is a 7 foot height clearance for pedestrians. And if you have shrubs bordering the sidewalk, be sure to keep them trimmed back from the sidewalk. Do not prune street trees (see the "[Public Right-of-Way Landscaping Maintenance](#)" pamphlet on our HOA website.)

Thanks for taking the time to inquire about lot maintenance. Remember to take compliance notifications as friendly reminders and work with our volunteers to resolve open issues. Open communication is the key. It is wonderful having good neighbors willing to pay the extra attention needed to keep The Parks the great place it is to call home.

