

Views from Avenel

Winter 2021



From the desk of Lucy Wilson General Manager

Welcome 2021 - we are happy to greet you, and hope you are good to us. With 2020 now in the rear-view mirror, we eagerly and optimistically look to the new year with more hope than likely ever before.

In the spirit of the new year, this first newsletter issue of the year includes submissions from new residents and committee members, who share their own views on life in Avenel.

From the ACA staff, we wish all of you the very best in the new year.

Financial Status *(unaudited) As of November 30th, 2020*

ASSETS

Cash	\$ 5,133,576
Accounts Receivables	\$ 66,618
Current Assets	\$ 51,016
Fixed Assets	\$ 1,214,199
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 6,465,409

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities	\$ 276,979
Note Payable	\$ 347,740
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 624,719

MEMBERS EQUITY	\$ 5,840,690
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*Information provided by Comsource Management, Inc.

Welcome to Avenel

The Avenel Community Association extends a warm welcome to the following new residents who joined our Community:

ABBEY TERRACE:

- The Kost Family

CHARTWELL:

- The Mahoney Family
- The Mountjoy Family

EAGLE RIDGE:

- The Borenstein and Levine Family
- The Gentry Family
- The Gulbrandson and Kravitz Family
- The Schmitz Family

OAKLYN WOODS:

- The Assefa Family
- The Givens Family

PLAYER'S CROSSING:

- The Englemann Family
- The Harris Family
- The Quirk Family

PLAYER'S GATE:

- The Anagnostou and Drosatou Family
- The Kimel Family

PLAYER'S TURNING:

- The Criswell and Nevis Family

PLEASANT GATE:

- The Asrar Family

PRESCOTT:

- The Abati and Smith Family
- The Bolado Family
- The Burstin Family
- The Taneja Family
- The Weiner Family

RAPLEY PRESERVE:

- The Ganguly Family
- The Garbis Family
- The Ruiz and Serrano Family

THE GATES:

- The Khalifeh Family
- The Schwed and Siegel Family
- The Shah Family

WILLOW GATE:

- The Diamond and Mickey Family

New Owner Meet & Greet

The Association held a virtual Meet & Greet for new owners on October 21, 2020. It was a pleasure to welcome the newest owners to the Avenel Community and hear the various stories of how they chose Avenel as their home.

Thank you to our event sponsors, whose contributions helped make the Meet & Greet a success:

Amy Michaels of Long & Foster/Christie's International Real Estate; Nancy Itteilag of Washington Fine Properties; Wendy Banner of The Banner Team; and Doc Keane & Marc Bertinelli of Washington Fine Properties.

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Board of Directors

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Vice President/Secretary Jennifer Kitchen
Vice President/Treasurer Maureen Scott
Vice President Tim Bender
Vice President Janelle Wright

Homeowners Advisory Committee (HAC)

Abbey Terrace Chris Cathcart
(301) 602-2964 8913 Abbey Terrace
Chartwell Mark Spivak
(202) 445-3993 10035 Avenel Farm Drive
Eagle Ridge Kathleen Pettitt
(301) 469-7454 7105 Natelli Woods Lane
Oaklyn Woods Neeraj Kak
(301) 365-3850 9876 Avenel Farm Drive
Player's Crossing Marsha Schuman
(301) 299-9598 8326 Turnberry Court
Player's Gate Leslie Libby
(301) 365-2026 9412 Wing Foot Court
Player's Turning TBD
Pleasant Gate Evelyn Robles
(301) 343-4476 9735 Pleasant Gate Lane
Prescott Nancy Itteilag
(202) 905-7762 7911 Sandalfoot Drive
Rapley Preserve Amy Michaels
(301) 365-5665 8519 Rapley Preserve Circle
Saunders Gate TBD
The Gates TBD
Willow Gate Lori Leasure
(301) 765-8318 9134 Willow Gate Lane

ACA OFFICE HOURS

Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
(301) 299-5916

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Aviation Noise | By Janelle Wright

Avenel Resident since 2014

Starting as soon as March 2021, The FAA has agreed to test a new way of directing approaches (arrivals) into Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). Instead of the current practice of directing nearly 100% of south-flow approaching aircraft to fly in a channelized manner over Montgomery County communities, the FAA will be "shortcutting" flights off of higher-altitude arrival flows early, which will recreate some dispersion in the airspace. It is expected that Avenel could experience a 20% or more decrease in the number of approaching flights. The test will last 180 days with more dispersion expected later in the test as Air Traffic Controllers get used to this new option for directing traffic. The test is primarily a data collecting effort that could result in further changes to published procedures, which would lead to even greater relief. Montgomery County's aviation consultant was instrumental in negotiating this test with the FAA.

Board member Janelle Wright is Avenel's representative to the Montgomery County Quiet Skies Coalition and a member of both the DCA Community Noise Working Group and the Working Group's technical subcommittee, which works on notional flight procedure designs to present to the FAA.



From the desk of Tom Ritter

Site Operations Manager

Overview of the Pesticide Ban and Organic Lawn Treatments in 2020

2020 was the first full year that traditional lawn weed control products were banned in Montgomery County. The impact of the pesticide ban was evident, as we experienced excessive weeds present in turf throughout the community. As previously communicated, the approved organic products available are both more costly and less effective than the products used in previous years, and the Association took a walk before run approach in the testing and use of organic products.

Two applications of Safer Play were applied to common areas in the spring as a pre-emergent for control of crabgrass. Results from the use of this product varied from fair to poor.

Last year, three spot treatments of the organic product, Fiesta, were applied to common areas and homeowner lawns to control broadleaf weeds between April and July. While this product was relatively effective and showed some promise in

killing the top growth of many broadleaf weeds, regrowth did occur in many instances because, unlike traditional products that kill the roots, Fiesta does not.

At this time, there are no approved post-emergent products available to control crabgrass, yellow nutsedge, or Japanese stiltgrass, a common weed in Avenel. As a result, there were severe outbreaks of these weeds between mid-July and late September. The fall lawn overseeding program was more aggressive in 2020 and most lawn areas recovered very well from the summer weed encroachment.

Looking ahead to the 2021 growing season, management is considering adding a fourth application of Fiesta for broadleaf weed control in September. We will continue the increased aeration effort in the fall to assist in establishing healthy turf. Finally, a Focus Group of seven residents has been created whose lawns will receive two applications of Safer Play for crabgrass control in the spring. This group will provide their opinion on the effectiveness, which will assist in the future evaluation of the cost versus benefit analysis.

We will continue to evaluate approved options.



By Andrew Singer
Avenel Resident since 2019

From the moment we drove through the Avenel neighborhood, we knew it was where we wanted to raise our two young kids. After several years, we sold our Bethesda home and found the perfect house on the perfect cul-de-sac in Player's Gate at Avenel. We have now lived here for

just over a year, and we still feel like we have to pinch ourselves. The feeling we get entering the neighborhood, driving past the stone pillars and beautiful landscaping doesn't get old! We take a family walk each evening that the weather permits all the way down Oaklyn Drive, and we still marvel at Avenel's unique beauty as we pass the horses, golf course, and the tennis and pool facilities. We feel extra fortunate that the neighbors in our cul-de-sac have quickly become our extended family. On any given day, you will find the neighbors of Crimson Leaf Court outside, congregating in the circle with dogs happily romping and kids playing. The Avenel community has become our bright spot, especially during tough times.

We felt especially welcome participating in the virtual new owner meet and greet organized by the Avenel Community Association. While this event was different from ones in the past due to the pandemic, we still felt a warm welcome from the management team, who went out of their way to ensure we met our new neighbors at a safe distance.

We have never felt such a sense of community since moving to the DC area over 10 years ago, and we feel so fortunate to have found this Potomac gem!

Andrew and Amy Singer

By Jason Drake

Modifications Committee Member since 2020

Avenel Resident since 2018

The search for the perfect neighborhood is defined differently by everyone. My wife and I have been working on our own definition for the best part of 17 years and we think Avenel just may be everything we hoped for. Within that time span of 17 years that I mentioned, we have moved nine times and owned seven homes in various states and experienced enough communities (and frankly HOAs) to know what we like and what we do not like. Living in Avenel was an aspirational goal for us. Avenel offers a life for our family that most only dream of. From the moment you drive past the stone columns, you are treated with beautiful landscaping and consistent aesthetics that make you proud to be a member of this community.

To be honest, I never envisioned myself being a part of any HOA committee. Maybe this stems from the fact that I've been on the other side of the conversation in other communities in years past. However, things are different in Avenel and the ACA simply does it right. After



By Peter Insani
Modifications Committee Member since 2020
Avenel Resident since 2018

WHAT ATTRACTED ME TO AVENEL

Having lived in the DC area on and off for most of my life, when it came time to retire, Sharon and I selected Avenel over cities in CA, Texas, and FL. The beauty of this community is timeless. The sense of community drew us here.

The pandemic has proven this is a safe place to be during these trying times.

WHAT MOTIVATED ME TO SERVE

The first time I sat on our deck and heard the horses in the pasture, golfers upping their ante, and birds singing, I knew I had to serve to maintain the beauty and charm that Avenel offers its residents.

VIEW ON IMPORTANCE OF COMMITTEE

As Avenel has aged these past 30+ years, my vision is to balance the needs of homeowners wishing to update and modernize, within the vision of the founders of Avenel and the Association. I believe I am a vocal advocate for homeowners and work to approve as many applications as possible while adhering to the Association's Guidelines and Governing Documents.



walking through a few simple modifications with the ACA myself, and helping others in my neighborhood navigate the guidelines, I started to wonder how I could become more involved. It was by complete coincidence that within a few days we would receive an ACA newsletter soliciting for volunteers. It was an easy decision at that point and I felt compelled to apply.

Now just over a year later since joining the Modification Committee, I am still motivated by the committee's genuine desire to accommodate residents' requests and/or work with them to achieve their goals while adhering to the community's architectural guidelines. Make no mistake about it, this is thankless work that is sometimes met with hostility from owners and mocked by casual residents. However, in a community of this stature and reputation, it is of the utmost importance that we maintain consistency in home and landscaping modifications as trends come and go and new products are introduced to the market.

Modifications

2020 was a big year for home improvements in Avenel. We would like to acknowledge and thank all our residents, both new and long-standing, for following the architectural review process by submitting their modification application forms and supporting documents for review by the Modifications Committee.

A Big Shout Out to All of the Modifications Committee Members

We want to take this opportunity to send out a huge thanks to our Modifications Committee members. All the members of the committee take time out of their busy schedules to review the applications, make site visits to the applicants' properties, and meet together monthly to discuss each application. The committee transitioned to virtual meetings this past year and continued their duties during the most challenging of times. The committee reviewed approximately 275 applications in 2020. Applications ranged from major home additions to landscape makeovers. Their work and energy provide a tremendous contribution that could not be achieved without them.

The Association is very appreciative of the Modifications Committee and all our wonderful volunteers. We look forward to working together in 2021 as we continue in our endeavor to maintain and enhance the properties in our beautiful community.

The Modifications Committee meets remotely on the second Monday of each month. Applications are due by noon the first Monday of each month, emailed in PDF format to karen@liveatavenel.com. Please be sure to adhere to the deadline.

Tips:

When planning an exterior modification—

- Avenel staff is always available to respond to homeowners' questions and help guide you through the application process. We're also happy to speak with your contractors and architects.
- Do not rely on neighboring improvements as an automatic guide for approval of your application. Guidelines are periodically revised and updated, and different home styles and villages may be subject to different guidelines. It is always wise to review the current architectural guidelines when planning your next project and consult with ACA staff.

Avenel Website

Liveatavenel.com includes access to:

- Architectural Guidelines
- Community Maintenance Standards
- Modification Application Form
- Board and Modifications Committee Meeting Agendas



By Diane Murphy

*Standards Committee Member since 2016
Avenel Resident since 2001*

My first exposure to Avenel's architectural and community-wide standards was the governing documents that arrived along with our settlement package over 20 years ago when John and I first moved to Avenel. We understood that in choosing to live in this community, we were to follow these "standards"; and likewise, our Community Association would ensure that our neighbors would do the same – no pink flamingoes in the front yard across the street, no neon shutters on the windows next door, and routine maintenance would be required of us all to ensure that our community aged gracefully.

Now in its fourth decade, Avenel continues to be a distinctly beautiful community with 14 different villages that have their own unique design and charm, and yes, often, their own standards to ensure that the architectural harmony of each village is retained. Having lived in three different villages in our 20 years in Avenel, I found myself often reading about community standards each time we moved. So, what have I learned?

- It is important to know and understand your village's theme, your exterior home/yard standards (such as maintaining original garage door and front door design, external lighting design, allowable sports and play equipment in yards and requirements to conceal them, etc.).
- Applying to the Modifications Committee before undertaking any changes prevents the possibility of having to incur costs to modify changes not approved, violations, and potential penalties and fines for being out-of-compliance with community standards (such as changes to landscaping, deck remodeling, fencing, window replacement, generator installation, etc.).
- Resale inspections to ensure compliance are performed when putting your house on the market, so it is always wise to make sure your home, yard, and landscaping are compliant with the community-wide maintenance standards and architectural guidelines so the transaction goes smoothly with no delay in the resale process.

I have volunteered to serve along with several other homeowners on the Standards Committee for several years and have an understanding and appreciation for the balance needed in maintaining consistency within our villages while also reflecting the need to update and freshen our homes and landscaping over time. While it may seem obvious, the areas we note that often require routine maintenance and upkeep include:

- Surfaces, including mailbox piers and capstones, that need to be power washed
- Windows that are missing muntins/mullions or shutters
- Decks and fences that need refinishing and painting
- Roofs that require cleaning or are in need of replacement
- Wood trims needing refinishing
- Exterior painting
- Overgrown landscaping and dead tree/stump removal

Collectively, as a community, we each play an important role in the process of maintaining the high standards that ultimately benefit us all and contribute to Avenel's continued distinct beauty and premier status.

We welcome your input and participation in the process of maintaining our community-wide standards.



Avenel State of the Market

By Stephanie Burke McGovern,
TTR Sotheby's International Realty
Avenel Resident since 2017

2020 was like no other year and we have all had to learn how to cope with the effects of COVID-19. What started off strong for the housing market and the economy was soon derailed in March by a global pandemic. Just as the national housing market started with substantial momentum, Avenel was also benefiting from a strong 2019 fall market when 46% of the 2019 sales closed in the 4th quarter. Once the virus started to quickly spread and businesses began to close, the number of contracts regionally was down about 30% from mid-March to about May 10th. Once Governor Hogan allowed outdoor activity in mid-May, the market snapped back like a rubber band. During the shutdown, the housing industry was deemed essential, as were construction, banking, and grocery stores, and real estate agents followed strict CDC protocols and precautions. This quickly brought about virtual technologies, such as live streaming open houses, virtual walk-throughs and showings on social media, and enhanced production of video tours that were put into place to assist with buying and selling homes.

For 2020, there were a total of 55 houses sold in Avenel, with 24 of them closing during the last quarter. This was a 15% increase from 2019, which had 47 sales and 22 of them closing in the 4th quarter. The Avenel market was resilient during the pandemic and even benefited from the consequences, as buyers from urban households wanted more square footage and green space. As of the first week of January 2021, there are 10 properties on the market, 4 under contract, and 1 coming soon in Avenel. The average sales price in 2020 was up 6%, from \$1,394,601 in 2019 to \$1,482,382 in 2020, according to the Bright MLS data. The number of home sales over \$1.8M declined in 2020 to 5, whereas we had 9 in 2019. The total number of days on the market decreased by almost 18%, with an average of 74 days on the market compared to 90 for 2019. Another good sign for Avenel is that the sold to list price went up to 98.2% for 2020 from 95.4% in 2019.

The housing market trends for 2021 will continue to be more listings that showcase features that support work-from-home space with offices, zoom rooms, high-speed internet connections, and outdoor green space. With more buyers interested in these features, and low-interest rates anchoring the market, Avenel is expected to continue its upward trend. Avenel is a desirable community with outdoor amenities, larger lots, and finished square footage, as well as being conveniently located to downtown Washington, Bethesda, Potomac, and Northern Virginia.

It's a great time to sell or buy a home with mortgage rates at the lowest they have been in years (2.66% for the average 30-year fixed nationally) along with the low inventory of available houses on the market. Heading into 2021, we expect rates to remain flat, potentially rising slightly off their record low, and solid purchase demand and tight inventory will continue to keep the market strong.

We are excited for what is in store for all of us in 2021, and I look forward to a busy 2021 in this wonderful community.

Refinancing Your Mortgage?

With interest rates at a record low, many owners have decided to refinance their mortgages. To request a copy of your most recent HOA statement, Certificate of Insurance for the ACA, or other information required by your mortgage lender, contact Tony Martella for assistance at tmartella@comsource.com.

2021 Assessments:

Assessment coupons for 2021 have been mailed by Comsource (CMI) and should have been received by all residents. For those residents who pay by automatic debit, make sure to modify your disbursement amount to reflect the 2021 assessment.

Automatic debit is a convenient method of paying your monthly assessments. To enroll, or for other questions regarding your assessments or assessment coupons, please contact CMI directly at 301-924-7355 or Tony Martella at tmartella@comsource.com.

Are You Missing Out?

The community emails sent out by the Association are chock full of timely information. The Association also sends emails to residents of specific villages when there is information specific to one section of the community. If you want to sign up for our mailing list, send a quick email to customerservice@liveatavenel.com with your email information.

Contractor Recommendations Book:

Did you know that the Avenel Community Association maintains a book of contractor referrals? Many of our residents refer to our community supported Contractor Recommendations book to find a contractor or service provider recommended by fellow residents.

One of the most neighborly things you can do is complete a contractor recommendation form to add to the list of names of good contractors. You can find the form on the Avenel website at Liveatavenel.com. Simply fill it out and email it to customerservice@liveatavenel.com, fax it to 301-299-7169, or mail the form to the ACA office.

Winter Weather Plan:

The Association's inclement weather plan is enacted when there is the potential for a winter weather precipitation event, including snow, sleet, and/or freezing rain. Generally, the policy is that snow is removed by the combined efforts of Montgomery County and McFall and Berry by plow from Avenel streets when the snowfall accumulation reaches two inches (2") or more. If the snowfall is less than two inches, it is generally the Association's policy to treat any impassable or unsafe areas with ice melting products. Common area sidewalks are also cleared and treated with ice melting products where deemed necessary.

Montgomery County ordinance requires that residents clear the sidewalks adjacent to their lots within twenty-four (24) hours of the end of precipitation.

In addition, please keep vehicles stored in driveways to avoid interference with snow plow efforts and so that snow plows can get through streets safely and effectively, particularly in narrow streets and cul-de-sacs.



Announcing the Arrival of Celia Hope Schlekeway:

Colby, his wife Melissa, and big brother Braden welcomed a beautiful baby girl, **Celia Hope**, to the world on December 24, 2020, just a few minutes shy of Christmas Day. Congratulations to Colby and his family on the new addition!



ACA Committee News:

ACA Committees are the lifeblood of our community. They are made up of resident volunteers who are appointed and approved by the Board of Directors. The Association is always looking for fresh ideas and perspectives on the issues facing our community. Joining a committee is a great way to give back to Avenel while volunteering your expertise and insight.

If you would like to serve on any of the ACA's committees in some capacity, please contact the ACA office for more information at 301-299-5916 or by email at customerservice@liveatavenel.com.

- **Modifications Committee** – There are openings for alternate members and an upcoming opening for a regular member (term expires in July).
- **Standards Committee** – There are currently positions open for alternate members.
- **Homeowners Advisory Committee (HAC)** – There are openings on the HAC for the villages of Player's Turning, Saunders Gate, and The Gates, and an upcoming opening for the village of Abbey Terrace (term expires in May).
- **Swim and Tennis Advisory Committee** – There are openings for regular members.
- **Landscape Committee** – Openings exist for regular members.
- **Social Committee** – All levels of involvement are welcome. In-person community events are currently suspended due to COVID-19.

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2021 is off to a great start! The Itteilag Team has been busy!
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Views from Avenel

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Upcoming Meetings* / ACA Events:

- ✕ **The Modifications Committee** – The Modifications Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of every month at 6:00 pm. Submissions to the Modifications Committee are due by the 1st Monday of every month.
- ✕ **The Standards Committee** The Standards Committee generally meets on the 1st Tuesday of every month on an as needed basis at 6:00pm.
- ✕ **The Homeowners Advisory Committee** The HAC generally meets once per quarter at 6:00 pm. The meeting dates for 2021 are scheduled as follows: February 24th, May 21st, August 25th, and November 17th.
- ✕ **The Board of Directors** – The Board of Directors generally meets on the 3rd or 4th Tuesday, every other month, at 8:30 am.



**Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Board of Directors and Committee meetings are currently being held virtually. For more information, please contact the ACA office.*

Please note that meeting dates and times are subject to change. Be sure to check Liveatavenel.com, or the ACA Bulletin Board, for current meeting dates/times, updates & important Community alerts, or call the ACA office at your convenience.