



Sherman Oaks Homeowners'  
Association, Trussville, Alabama  
Newsletter, June, 2022  
[www.shermanoakstrussville.com](http://www.shermanoakstrussville.com)

### Neighborhood Meeting October 11

Please mark your calendar. Our 2022 Sherman Oaks neighborhood meeting is **Tuesday, October 11, 6:30–8** at the Trussville Public Library, 201 Parkway Drive. Meet your neighbors, including your Sherman Oaks Homeowners' Association Board of Directors [SOHA-BOD]. Examine the annotated and updated subdivision map, review our SOHA budget and expenses, and learn where your dues go. Discuss neighborhood issues and learn how Trussville activities and ordinances affect our neighborhood. We look forward to seeing you.

### No Renters in Sherman Oaks

You've probably read that single-family home rentals are surging in response to US consumer demands. This year, the single-family home rental business is expected to reach \$50 billion according to Bloomberg News. Large national brokers aggressively seek property, especially in attractive neighborhoods like ours. Rising home prices and interest costs further raise the pressure to invest. Sherman Oaks homeowners receive cold calls, emails, and texts offering to buy their property, and if you list your home, predatory companies offer more than your asking price in cash without an inspection.



When you ask an investment caller whom they represent, you can't get a clear answer. Renters, for whom nameless nationwide investors may waive background checks, pay \$2000–\$3000 a month for homes like ours, but learn that when they require maintenance, the manager is unreachable. Homeowners know that rentals change the character of a neighborhood and may reduce property values.

In 2019, the SOHA BOD recognized rental risks and amended our covenant to restrict our properties to "owner-occupied." The amended covenant, which appears on our website, was overwhelmingly approved by residents in a 2020 mail ballot and was subsequently filed by Attorney **David Blount** with Jefferson County Probate Court.

Sherman Oaks is one of the most desirable Trussville neighborhoods for its beauty, home quality, location, and property values, and new occupying owners are warmly welcomed. Since 2021, several Trussville homeowner association presidents, facing similar risks, have contacted SOHA's BOD, asking how we amended our covenant. Several have asked for copies. Meanwhile, since 2020, nearly all renters have left Sherman Oaks as their residences were sold to occupying owners.

## Don't Sell to Investors

If you list your home, please direct predatory investors to our covenant. Closing agents contact SOHA to confirm that sellers are current in dues and assessments. We use that opportunity to inform them of the "owner-occupied" restriction and we require a *signed statement of compliance*. On four occasions, the BOD intervened to thwart investors, each time protected by our Attorneys Blount and Davis.



## SOHA Directors

Consider serving as a director, it is a good way to get to know and appreciate your neighbors and to learn what is happening in our neighborhood and the city. Chit-chat before and after meetings includes news about restaurants, church doings, new businesses, city inspections, the entertainment district, and city council decisions. Our officers are **Don McGriff**, president; **Larry Abbott**, vice-president, **Sue Evans**, treasurer; **Eli Kirkley**, webmaster, **Dawn Lunsford**, hospitality, and **George Fritsma**, secretary. Our directors are **Pam Cargo**, **Jack Evans**, **Mike Ford**, **Susan Short**, and **Rory Wysong**.

## Dues

Our 2022 annual dues remain at \$225, billed in January. In 2021 we provided Hallmark's billing address, **Hallmark Bookkeeping and Accounting, 3015 Eagle Ridge Lane, Birmingham, AL 35242-5461** for those who pay by check, eliminating the delay incurred when mailing payments to our PO box. Please continue to address *non-dues correspondence* to **SOHA, PO Box 400, Trussville, AL 35173**. The most convenient way to meet your obligation is to pay online at [shermanoakstrussville.com](http://shermanoakstrussville.com).

Our collections January through June are up 6.8% over last year, thanks to timely enforcement by Hallmark. The January invoice specifies the February payment deadline, usually near the first of the month. Those of us who miss the deadline receive a second payment notice with a \$25 late fee added. Failure to pay in response to the second notice or *failure to add the late fee* with your late payment results in a third billing with an additional \$50 fee. To honor faithful residents who pay cheerfully and to protect our property values, we work with our attorneys to apply legal means to collect debts including property liens, small claims lawsuits, and income garnishment.

## Vehicle Parking

A Trussville ordinance prevents vehicle storage on a public right-of-way. While we like to be reasonable, residents become concerned about long-term street parking, especially if a vehicle reduces visibility at a curve or hilltop. Since street parking is a public safety concern, please forward your complaint to the Trussville Police.

## Covenant Variances: Vehicles

In November, 2021, having purchased directors' and officers' liability insurance and retained reliable attorneys, the SOHA BOD began identifying and helping to correct covenant variances, beginning with vehicles and fences. This list duplicates what our covenant says about vehicles:

Each of us with a vehicle variance received a letter from Attorneys Davis and Blount detailing the variance and providing 90 days to correct it. Out-of-compliance residents were invited to meet with the BOD to discuss their

- A. Ordinary household vehicles such as sedans, sport utility vehicles, pick-up trucks, family vans, motorcycles, or motor scooters shall be parked in garages, driveways, or paved areas within the Lot.
- B. Automobiles or similar vehicles that are kept on blocks or stored on any Lot must not be visible from the public right of way.
- C. Owners shall park or store boats, boat trailers, utility trailers, campers, mobile homes, and recreational vehicles in locations that are not visible from the public right of way.
- D. Owners shall not park any truck or commercial vehicle over one ton payload, no bus, or any similar vehicle on their Lot or on the public right of way.
- E. Homeowners shall provide parking space adequate for the use of the occupants.
- F. Parking and vehicle storage on the public right of way or on the grass to accommodate residents is prohibited. Temporary public right of way parking for visitors and guests is permitted.
- G. No junk, inoperable, or abandoned vehicle shall be parked or stored on any Property.

concerns. Unless we reach a justifiable accommodation, the resident is billed a \$100 assessment if the change was not made within 90 days and continues to be billed an additional \$100 a month for failure to correct the variance. Residents who remain non-compliant face a legal remedy such as a property lien, lawsuit in small claims court, or income garnishment.

## Covenant Variances: Fences

The covenant also details this fencing restriction: *"No fencing shall extend nearer the street than the rear line of the dwelling,"* which affected a few residents and triggered the same assessment process, including the opportunity to meet with the BOD.



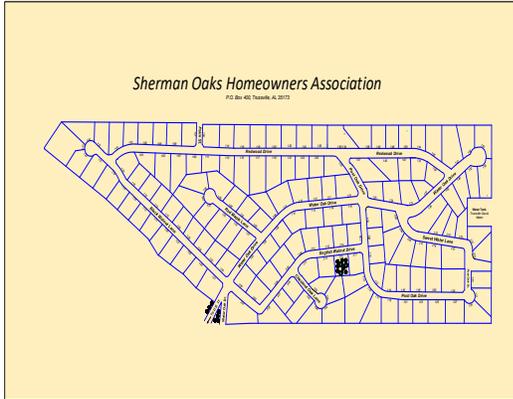
We've found that the \$100 a month assessment may not be sufficiently motivational, so beginning January 1, 2023, the non-compliance assessment will be raised to \$250 a month for six months, followed by legal action. Enforcing restrictions isn't the directors' favorite task, but it is done in response to residents' concerns. If you see a variance, please pass your report along to one of the directors. In the interest of neighborhood harmony, we manage variances in confidence.

## Dogs

Cats do as they please, but Sherman Oaks residents should always fence or leash our dogs. Many take advantage of the dog park on Cherokee Drive. If you see a dog running free and don't know the owners, or if a dog creates a waste or noise problem, file your complaint with the Trussville Police, as Trussville has no humane society or animal control office.

*Residents should never allow their dog's droppings to remain in place in the gutters or on neighbors' lawns, especially as there is always someone nearby with a camera.*





## SOHA Map

Here is our subdivision map, first prepared in 1994 when sectors three and four were opened. The SOHA BOD maintains copies of this map with residents' names appended to each address. You may view a copy of the annotated map during our next neighborhood meeting on **Tuesday, October 11 at 6:30 PM in the Trussville library**. To protect residents' privacy, the map with residents' names is not distributed to the public. **When you update your phone number or email address, please forward the change to the SOHA BOD.**

## Current SOHA Board Activities

- We provide welcome materials to new homeowners.
- We use the FLOCK system to count vehicles passing through our entrance and driving along Back Walnut Drive and Redwood Drive on their way to the Trussville Sports Complex.
- We periodically request Trussville officials to install speed cushions on route to the Sports Complex to discourage speeding. We continue to get no response, but we keep trying.
- We periodically communicate with the city clerk, mayor, police chief, and fire chief, requesting they install four-way stop signs at the limited visibility intersection of Water Oak Drive and Post Oak Drive, but with no response.
- We provide documents for home sale closing agents who request confirmation that sellers are current on dues and assessments. For sellers who are delinquent, we collect the balance and assessments at the time of sale. We use this occasion to inform closing agents, sellers, and buyers of our requirement that the home be owner-occupied.
- We maintain the front entrance park. We contract with Green Life, Inc. to cut the grass, maintain the flowers, shrubs, and trees, spread mulch, weed killer, and fertilizer. We maintain the flag, bridge, irrigation, and lights. We contact Alabama Power to maintain the entryway street lamps.
- We arrange for holiday decorations and lay out the jug lights. We provide jug lights to our residents at cost.
- We communicate with Trussville and vacant lot owners to control overgrowth.
- We communicate with several fellow Trussville homeowners' association officers.
- We address your concerns.

## SOHA Message Board



If you have a message you'd like to place on our board, please send it to **George Fritsma** at [gfritsma@gmail.com](mailto:gfritsma@gmail.com). Make it short enough for drivers to read. We post *yard sales, graduations, church activities, birth announcements, school and city information*, or anything of interest to Sherman Oaks residents. The sign also provides our web site address, and we sometimes display the speed limit in hopes of controlling traffic to the Trussville Sports Complex.