

Bloomingtondale Homeowners Board Cracks Down On Code Violators

PROPERTIES TO BE INSPECTED

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Bloomingtondale homeowners with overgrown lawns, peeling paint and cars parked on the grass should take note.

As of April 1, the Bloomingtondale Homeowners Association has stepped up efforts to enforce the community's deed restrictions.

Frustrated by past volunteer efforts to crack down on violators, the BHA board hired an independent enforcement management company to inspect neighborhoods for deed restriction and county code enforcement violations.

The new enforcement company, Neighborhood Standards, will regularly inspect neighborhoods, photograph and note any deed or code

enforcement violations, and then send letters to the offending property owners.

The BHA previously performed this function through its Neighborhood Improvement Program. However, BHA President Ted Grable said it was difficult to get volunteers willing to inspect neighborhoods on a consistent basis.

"I think there's a value to having someone who does it all the time and inspects property on a regular cycle," said Grable.

The enforcement company will inspect the 3,100 homes in Bloomingtondale that do not fall under the jurisdiction of a mandatory homeowners association. Each of these sections has a different set of deed restrictions, some 50 sets total, the new manager will have to become familiar with. The remaining 1,358 homes in Bloomingtondale fall under the

purview of mandatory homeowners associations that do their own enforcement.

"I think this is a very positive step," said BHA board member Lydia Harrod. "We get so many complaints about deed restrictions. We need to take a proactive approach."

Already, the BHA has identified the rental properties in Bloomingtondale, which tend to be the biggest violators. Earlier this year, letters were sent out to 300 property owners notifying them of the BHA's stepped-up enforcement effort. About half of those properties have identifiable deed or code violations.

The BHA also plans to post all the various sets of deed restrictions on its new Web site, currently under construction, so residents will have easy access to them. The Web site will include a complaint form. The anonymous complaints

will go directly to the enforcement company to be investigated within 24 hours.

Among the items the investigator will look at are the condition of the paint and siding, whether house numbers are displayed properly, whether fencing is in good condition, overgrown lawns, inoperative vehicles on the property, vehicles parked on the lawn or across the sidewalk, illegal recreational vehicles, dirty and stained driveways, unkempt bushes and trees, trash in the yard and visible garbage cans.

The investigator also will look for commercial uses taking place in residential areas and commercial vehicles parked at residences overnight as well as other activities that could be a nuisance to neighbors.

If the property owner doesn't correct the problem after two notifications, the matter will be referred to the county if

it's a code enforcement violation or the BHA will consider civil action against the owner.

Grable said it's all part of the association's effort to see that Bloomingtondale ages gracefully. Last year Bloomingtondale started a voluntary community cleanup program, called PRIDE, which received Hillsborough County honors for best neighborhood improvement program.

"We believe there are certain standards that need to be maintained in Bloomingtondale," said Grable. "We've already seen a big change in the community since we began our PRIDE program. This is just the next step. Everyone wants to live in a friendly, neat, healthy and safe neighborhood."

For questions about the Bloomingtondale Neighborhood Standards Program, e-mail NeighborhoodStandards@TampaBay.fl.com.