

# Laurel Branch Homeowners Association, Inc.

## *RESIDENT GUIDELINES*

RECORDING FEE	25.00
TOTAL	25.00
Rest CH23	Acct # 37263
SLR NLW	BLR # 1013
Oct 15, 2008	12:48 PM

2008  
Second Edition

## GENERAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

The Laurel Branch Homeowners Association Board of Directors is authorized through the Articles of Incorporation of the Laurel Branch Homeowners Association to "adopt and promulgate reasonable rules and regulations regarding the administration, interpretation, and enforcement of the provisions of the Laurel Branch Declaration" of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions. "In adopting and promulgating such rules and regulations, the Association Board shall seek to advance the best interests of the owners and other members to the end that the Laurel Branch Subdivision shall be preserved and maintained as a high quality community and shall seek to achieve its development, including the maintenance and operation of common areas and the facilities therein." The Board of Directors, as well as the Architectural Committee, will modify/update these Guidelines as the need arises. The Board thanks those Association members who took the time to review these Guidelines and provide comments to the Board.

The mission and vision of Laurel Branch Homeowners Association are as follows:

### *Mission:*

- The Laurel Branch Homeowners' Association exists to arrange for the provision and support of common areas and all facilities, as well as to enhance and protect the value, desirability, and community attractiveness of the Laurel Branch Community.

### *Vision:*

- The vision of Laurel Branch is to ensure the privacy, rural aspect, as well as the high level of desirability and resale value of the community.

### **Who to contact?**

Management by: Comanco Inc. (301) 261-6400

## WHAT ARE THE COVENANTS?

The covenants are one of the many documents Laurel Branch homeowners received at the time of settlement on their property. It is important that each homeowner read and understand the "Amended Declaration of Protective Covenants" dated 15 January 1980

The covenants assure the residents of certain minimum standards for land use, architectural design, and property maintenance throughout the neighborhood. The intended result is to help maintain and/or increase the value of your home. The covenants also provide for your membership in the Laurel Branch Homeowners Association, Inc., and establish the mechanism for the operation of this Association.

The covenants "run with the land" as part of your deed of ownership and may only be amended by an instrument signed by not less than ninety (90%) percent of the lot owners. (See covenants

Article VII, Section 3). The covenants are a contract between the Association, as represented by its elected Board of Directors, and the Laurel Branch residents. Thus, working within the covenants and the architectural process, residents are working with friends and neighbors in Laurel Branch. The Board's intent and duty is to help homeowners obtain the maximum enjoyment of your private property and the commonly owned property, which is consistent with your obligations to the other residents.

## ARCHITECTURAL PROCESS

The Architectural committee is comprised of Laurel Branch residents. Any resident interested in serving on this committee should contact a member of the Board of Directors or the management company. This practice assures the process is in the hands of your elected representatives and their appointees. In addition, the Laurel Branch Homeowners Association employs a professional property manager, who is available to assist you in preparation of exterior alteration applications and to respond to questions and complaints on architectural and maintenance matters.

## COMPLIANCE

In order to ensure that property values are maintained as required by the covenants, your elected representatives must ensure compliance with the covenants.

Homeowners are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their homes and properties. The following is an example of items to maintain; however maintenance and care is not limited to these items.

- Siding must be maintained, cleaned, or replaced.
- Gutters and downspouts must be in place and maintained.
- Lawns must be cut, fertilized, and maintained (less than 5" maximum) at all times.
- Trimming – all grass areas that cannot be cut with a lawn mower must be trimmed.
- Shrubs - minimum amount in front of house, NOT OVERGROWN –landscaping must not cover windows.
- Decks – must be maintained and repaired as needed.
- Garage Doors – must be kept in good condition or replaced.
- Doors – all outside doors must have approved colors and be maintained.
- Mold – remove from siding and roof.
- Trees – remove and replace any dead trees; remove hanging limbs from healthy trees.
- Storage – no excess storage is to be kept in the front or side of the house, including carports.
- Culvert – must be kept clean.
- Signs – no signs or large banners can be displayed in windows.
- Painting – shutters, doors, wood siding, and trim must be maintained.
- Propane Tanks – must be limited in view from the street or screened.

**NOTE: Approval by the Association does not relieve the homeowner of the responsibility of obtaining all required county permits.**

The following procedures have been established to ensure compliance with the covenants and guidelines:

1. When a violation is cited, notice of the violation is sent to the homeowner.
2. If no communication is received from the homeowner and the problem is not resolved within the specified time period, a second notice is sent to the homeowner.
3. If communication or corrective action is still not taken, the matter is referred to legal counsel for enforcement of the covenants and restrictions.
4. Please note that homeowners who are in violation but have not been cited are not exempt from the violation; the item in question must still be resolved.

**OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY VIOLATIONS BY THEIR TENANTS AS WELL AS ALL LEGAL FEES REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE WITH THE SITED VIOLATIONS.**

**Maryland real estate law requires that "resale" packages be provided to buyers by the seller to provide complete property and association information, including the latest covenant and guidelines. Resale packages are available from [condo.certs.com](http://condo.certs.com) for a fee.**

### **ATTIC VENTILATORS**

All installations require an application showing elevations of the ventilator installation. The following provisions must be met regarding any attic ventilator that is on the exterior of the structure:

1. No part of the ventilator shall protrude more than 12" above the roof surface.
2. The ventilator shall be mounted and located on the least visible side of the roof and not extend above the ridgeline.
3. If it becomes necessary to block airflow through the ventilator, this should be done from the inside of the structure.

### **AIR CONDITIONERS (WINDOW UNITS)**

Window air conditioning units are not permitted.

## **AWNINGS AND SUN TRELLISES**

A complete application is required and must include:

1. Dimensions.
2. Color and style of structure.
3. Color Sample (if possible) and description of materials to be used.
4. Detailed drawings of the trellis or awning(s).
5. Description of method of support and attachment to structure.

## **BASKETBALL BACKBOARDS**

Portable backboards must be removed from sight when not in use. Permanent backboards will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A complete application is required for all permanent backboards showing placement in relation to the home/driveway/street/lot-line.

## **BICYCLES, TOYS, AND YARD EQUIPMENT, ETC.**

All bicycles, tricycles, mopeds, toys, yard equipment and the like must be stored from public view when not in use.

## **CLOTHES POLES**

Clothes poles must be installed directly behind the dwelling and in such a manner as to not be visible from the street.

## **CLUTTER**

Miscellaneous materials shall not be stored in the front or sides, including carports, of any dwelling. Storage of materials in the rear of the dwelling shall be orderly and out of view from the street.

## **CHIMNEYS (RESIDENTIAL) AND SMOKESTACKS**

Chimneys not constructed with the original structure require a full application to the Architectural Committee.

## **COMMERCIAL USES**

No home or lot shall be used for any commercial enterprise, other than that allowable by county regulations (such as an in-home office or licensed day care).

## COMMON AREAS

Common areas shall not be used by homeowners. Clearing and/or cutting trees on common areas is prohibited. Storage and dumping are not permitted on common areas. Parking on streets adjacent to common areas, as well as on roadside grass and in paved cul-de-sacs, is not permitted.

## DECKS, PATIOS AND WALKWAYS

This guideline refers to any new or expanded patio, deck or walkway; or to any material changes in existing decks, patios and walkways. All new materials should be of a simple material of a neutral color, such as un-dyed concrete, stone or clay brick, vinyl or wood.

1. Decks and patios may be constructed of wood, masonry, vinyl, stone or concrete, providing the color and texture of the material is in harmony with the adjacent structures.
2. Decks and patios must be located to the rear of the dwelling and may not extend beyond either side of the dwelling.
3. An application is not required when replacing a patio, deck or walkway with the same type structure and the materials are identical or similar in color, texture, size and style.
4. An application must be completed for all other patios, decks or walkways; in some cases, a building permit is required.
5. An application must include:
  - a. Site plan with dimensions detailing any new walkway, deck or patio in relation to the house, trees and lot boundaries.
  - b. A list and description of materials to be used.
  - c. Plat diagram showing location of home.

## DOG HOUSES

Under no circumstances is a doghouse to be placed in the front yard area. Doghouses may only be placed in a fenced in area behind your home.

## FENCES

An application is required for all fences. Wood fences (of any style) and/or vinyl are the only type allowed. **No chain link fencing is permitted.** Fences are restricted to the rear and side yard areas and may not extend beyond the front corners of the dwelling. Only one fence shall be allowed on any common property line between homeowners. **Fences shall not exceed 6 feet in height and must be properly maintained and replaced as needed.**

### **GARDENS (ROCK)**

Written approval is not necessary for rock gardens at grade, provided the rocks are left in their natural color.

### **GARDENS (VEGETABLE)**

Written approval is not necessary for a vegetable garden, provided it is in the rear yard area of the lot and screened from public view.

### **GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS**

Gutters and downspouts are required on all houses. Written approval is not required for replacement if matched to the color of the house or trim. Color changes require a complete application.

### **LAWN CARE/LANDSCAPING**

All lawn areas (front, sides, and rear of house) must be grassed and maintained. Grass must be kept cut (maximum height of 5" is permitted prior to a violation notice), including culvert areas, which must remain free of high weeds and cat-tails. Dead trees and/or stumps must be removed from front and side yard areas. Low-hanging branches must be four feet from the ground, unless the tree is an ornamental tree. Shrubs must not obstruct the windows on the house. If the windows are at the ground level, the shrubs must not be higher than two feet six inches (2'6") maximum. Replacement of large overgrown shrubs will be required when not trimmed or maintained. Landscaping is required across the entire front of each dwelling, excluding original asphalt and/or concrete surfaces. Removing landscaping or not replacing dead landscaping is not permitted.

### **LAWN ORNAMENTS AND LAWN EMBELLISHMENTS**

Lawn ornaments and embellishments over two feet in height require approval by the Architectural Committee. All lawn ornaments and embellishments two feet in height and under must align with the architectural and aesthetic character of the neighborhood. The maximum number of lawn ornaments, regardless of size, forward from the rear line house, is five (5).

Miniature fencing (one foot or less) is not permitted.

## **LIGHTING (RESIDENTIAL)**

The replacement of an existing light fixture, if accomplished with a realistic match to the old fixture, does not require approval from the Architectural Committee. An application is required if a change in style, size, shape, color or positioning is desired, or if additional light fixtures are to be installed on existing or new structures.

Additional permanent lighting to be installed within view of street requires a full application. All exterior lighting should be installed so as to not shine on adjacent property or public space, and should be aesthetically planned for each location.

Flood lights and various types of high output lights fall under the category of security lighting. Exterior lighting of this type must be considered more carefully because of the impact on neighboring properties. Light fixtures of this type should be carefully aimed so that they illuminate only a specific area, such as a rear doorway. Some high output light fixtures may have to be shielded in a manner similar to some street light installations to prevent unwanted or excessive intrusion of light from one property to another.

Temporary lighting for decorations, holiday, and festival use does not require a formal application. Holiday lighting may be installed only from the first Saturday after Thanksgiving to the first Saturday after New Years Day. Any other use of temporary lighting (birthdays, weddings, etc.) shall be for a period of no more than three (3) days.

Bug lights are permitted in the rear yard only.

## **MAJOR BUILDING ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS**

All home additions require a full application, including drawings of lot location and elevations, photographs or actual samples of colors/materials to be used and the identity of who will be performing the work.

An application is required for all driveway extensions – paved and gravel type.

## **PETS**

No livestock, poultry, or other farm animals shall be kept on the property. In no event shall any stable, barn, coop or other shelter for animals be placed upon any property.

Dogs, cats and other household pets may be kept on the property provided that they are not raised or bred for any commercial purposes. Pets must be leashed or within a fenced yard at all times.



## **PLANTINGS**

Applications are not required for foundation plantings, trees, or single plantings; however, a complete application is required for hedges. All plantings must be trimmed, maintained, or replaced as needed.

## **PRIVATE POOL/HOT TUBS**

A complete application is required for the installation of any in-ground or above-ground private pool, hot tub or spa showing type, size and lot location in relation to the home. Portable children's wading pools not to exceed six (6) feet in diameter are permitted without an application and are restricted to the rear yard of the home.

## **REPAINTING GUIDELINES**

An application is required when a house, siding trim or shutters, are to be painted or replaced with a color different than its existing color. Applications must include samples of all color changes, as well as a description of where on the house changes will occur.

## **RE-SIDING/RETYLING STRUCTURES**

A complete application must be submitted and is to include:

1. A photograph or sketch of existing the house, including the color and texture of existing siding materials.
2. A description of the proposed re-siding material including color, texture, and manner in which it will be applied. Color and texture samples must be submitted with the application. Significant changes on present size and location, and removal or the addition of other stylistic features should also be noted.
3. Description of proposed treatment of outbuildings, such as sheds. Re-siding or repainting such structures may be required.

## **SATELLITE ANTENNAE/DISHES**

Placement of dishes will be restricted to the rear and side yard areas and may not extend beyond the front corners of the dwelling. All roof-mounted satellite dishes (such as Direct TV) must be located on the rear side of the roof or house, when possible.

## SCREENS, STORM WINDOWS AND STORM DOORS

An application is required for all screens, storm windows, and storm doors. All applications should include a photograph and/or brochure, with descriptions of material, color and style to be used.

## SHED/OUTBUILDING (STORAGE)

Outbuildings or sheds must be located behind the rear of the dwelling. Per the covenants, only one outbuilding or shed per home is allowed, and its use is limited to storage. A lean-to and/or additions to the shed or outbuilding are not permitted. If an outbuilding or storage shed is to be attached to the rear of the dwelling, then one wall must be in common with the dwelling and it must be constructed of the same materials as the dwelling.

The siding, doors, and trim must be the same size, color and texture as that of the dwelling. Freestanding outbuildings/sheds must match the color and architecture of the home. If the house is restyled, re-sided, or painted a different color than the original color, the existing shed must be made to match.

Use of outbuildings for business activities is prohibited. (see covenant section 9). Trailers, tents, and truck bodies as temporary structures are not allowed.

A full application is required for all outbuildings or sheds and must include:

1. Site plan to include the relationship of the outbuilding/shed to the adjacent house and property lines.
2. Picture and/or detailed drawing of the outbuilding/shed to include dimensions.
3. Description of materials to be used.
4. Color of outbuilding/shed and house.

Additional out-structures of different types (such as gazebos, garages, play houses, etc.) which are used for different purposes, will be considered on a case-by-case basis, which requires submission of an architectural application prior to approval.

## SIGNS

No signs or advertising devices of any character shall be erected, posted or displayed on, in or about any lot or dwelling. **Exception:** One (1) temporary real estate sign may be placed on a lot for any home placed on the market for sale or rent and shall be removed promptly upon sale or rental.

## **SOLAR COLLECTORS**

An application is required and will be considered on a case-by-case basis with special exception. If approved, the solar collectors must be maintained during use and removed when not in use.

## **SWING SETS AND SANDBOXES**

Any play equipment must be located behind the home. Applications are not required for swing sets and sandboxes.

## **TARPS**

All tarps used that are visible from the street must be of natural color.

## **TRASH**

Trash receptacles, including recycling bins, must be stored out of public view at all times, except from 6 p.m. the evening prior to collection until 8 p.m. the evening of collection. No accumulation or storage of any materials (new or used) shall be permitted on any lot.

## **TREES**

No cutting or thinning of trees on common property is permitted.

## **VEHICLES**

No vehicle may be parked on the front lawn or any grass areas of any residence. Vehicles shall not be parked in any cul-de-sac. Vehicles must be parked on approved paved areas within the homeowner's driveway or behind the rear of the house, concealed from view of the street by an approved fence. Vehicles without valid registration tags shall not be parked beyond the rear of the house and must be concealed from view of the street by an approved fence.

### **Vehicle repair**

Car repairs are restricted to your driveway or garage. All tools and materials must be removed daily for a safe and neat appearance. Vehicles are not to remain on jacks, blocks or ramps.

### **Vehicles, commercial and recreational and parking**

All boats, trailers, motor homes, recreational vehicles, and commercial vehicles can only be parked on the property if such vehicles are kept in a closed garage, or behind the rear of the dwelling, out of public view and screened by appropriate fencing material. The maximum allowed is one of each type of these vehicles per residence. Applications for special exceptions can be submitted to the Board of Directors and/or the Architectural Committee.

The following are examples (but not limited to) of vehicles deemed as commercial/recreational vehicles and are prohibited from parking within the Laurel Branch Community, except as noted above:

1. Vehicles with more than two (2) axles. Personally-owned duallys are excluded.
2. Vehicles exceeding a length of twenty (20) feet (not including trailer hitches).
3. All towed vehicles and/or towed carriers (such as trailers), regardless of size.
4. Any vehicle larger than one ton.
5. Semis, flatbeds, step vans, buses, tow trucks, moving vans, tractors, wreckers, hearses, compressors, concrete mixers, dump trucks, garbage trucks and similar commercial vehicles are prohibited.
6. Vehicles with commercial lettering

**Commercial Vehicles** – Commercial vehicle lettering or signs must be limited to driver and passenger doors and rear tailgate. These vehicles must be stored behind the rear of the house and screened.

**Motorcycles** – All motorcycles must be stored in a closed garage or out of the view from street, except for carports where they exist. All unlicensed motorcycles or recreational vehicles must be stored out of sight. During periods of continuous use motorcycles can be store in the driveway.

### **WOOD STORAGE/FIREWOOD**

Storage of firewood is permitted as long as the wood is kept away from the home and is stored in the rear yard area out of public view. Wood can be covered using only a natural color tarp.