

# **BELLOWS FARM COMMUNITY HANDBOOK**

**October 2019**



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## **1. Handbook Introduction**

### ***Hello Bellows Farm Neighbors,***

The Board of Trustees is pleased to provide an updated Bellows Farm Community Handbook on how our Homeowners' Association works and how to get things done. We hope that this handbook is useful and are open to future suggestions on how to make this reference tool more helpful to you.

***The Board of Trustees***

## **2. How The Association Works**

The association is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of 5 members with staggered 2-year terms. Trustee election requires a quorum of at least 50% of households voting at the Annual Meeting in November or by submitting a proxy prior to the meeting. Each household has one vote. If a quorum is not achieved, the Board may choose its own members. At each Annual Meeting, the Board reports on financial results, key initiatives and important issues for the next year.

### **What does the Board of Trustees Do?**

The community entrusts its Trustees to consistently enforce the association's Master Deed and Declaration of Trust which include rules and regulations for both the common areas and individual homeowner properties in order to protect property values. The Trustees ensure that the community's 18 private roads and all its common areas are well maintained and that capital reserves and other funding sources are in place for common area investments. The Town of Acton is responsible for maintaining the 3 public roads in our community: Davis Road, Bellows Farm Road and Briar Hill Road.

### **What Are the Bellows Farm Master Deed and Declaration of Trust For?**

The Bellows Farm Association Master Deed and Declaration of Trust outline both homeowners' and Board of Trustees' responsibilities. These rules are designed to protect property values and ensure that Bellows Farm is a first class community. All homeowners are required to follow the rules and regulations. If you do not have a copy of the Master Deed or Declaration of Trust which detail how common areas are to be used, homeowners' responsibilities and regulations regarding their individual property and Trustees' responsibilities, you can find them within the Governing Documents section on Alpine's website at [www.alpinemanagement.com](http://www.alpinemanagement.com).

## **3. When To Contact Bellows Farm's Property Management Company**

The Board works with a property management company, Alpine Management, to manage the association and assist in enforcing all by-laws. The Bellows Farm Homeowners' Association currently uses Alpine Property Management to handle numerous administrative, financial and communication functions, as well as manage contracts and vendors with oversight from the Board of Trustees.

**Contact:**

Elizabeth Kidawski, Property Manager  
Tel: 978-371-9090 x21

Email: [ekc@AlpineManagement.com](mailto:ekc@AlpineManagement.com)  
Fax: 978-369-1951

**When to Contact Alpine:**

1. Questions about by-laws, process and forms
2. How to pay monthly condo fees, request a payment coupon booklet
3. How to sign into their website, create an account, search for a document
4. Submit Exterior Paint Request Form for Board's review and approval
5. Submit Architectural Modification Form for Board's review and approval
6. Sale of home
7. Submitting proxies for Trustee elections prior to the Annual Meeting
8. Suggestions for common area improvements, feedback and complaints

**How to Pay Your Monthly Assessments**

There are 3 options to pay your monthly assessments:

1. Check: Mail in check along with statement from your coupon book
2. Alpine Website: Pay online with a credit card or electronic check
3. On-Line bank payment: Initiate the monthly payment through your bank's online bill payment services.

**4. How To Stay Informed**

- a) **Alpine Management's website**, [www.alpinemanagement.com](http://www.alpinemanagement.com), has numerous documents available to all residents. The "Click here to sign in" link is near the top of the page. If you have not created an account, you can do so there. You will need your account number (on your condo fee payment coupon). If you don't know your account number, please contact Nancy Flaherty at [nab@alpinemanagement.com](mailto:nab@alpinemanagement.com).
  - Under My Profile, submit an email to receive important email notifications
  - Under Resident Services, Management Office and Forms section has Paint Change Request form, Architectural Modification Request form.
  - The Resource Center tab has a number of sections including:
    - Annual Budget and Monthly Financial Results
    - Governing documents: Bellows Farm Master Deed and Trust
    - Insurance Information
    - Notices and Newsletters
    - Welcome Packet for New Residents
- b) **Bellows Farm Newsletter:** The Trustees distribute a community newsletter 4 times annually. This newsletter highlights key events, financial and project updates, common area improvements and other noteworthy topics.

- c) **Bellows Farm Yahoo Forum:** The Bellows Farm community also has a separate Yahoo forum. This was created in 2003 and is administered by a Bellows Farm homeowner. This group is not an Alpine Management or Board of Trustees tool, but is very useful for neighborhood networking. Many homeowners use it to ask for advice on contractors, how to solve a house or landscaping issue, fundraising events, and other community topics.
- To join the Yahoo group: 1) email the forum's administrator, Eric Shen, at [ericshenus@gmail.com](mailto:ericshenus@gmail.com). Eric is a longtime resident of Bellows Farm. Your email should contain your name, email and house address; 2) Eric will then add you to the distribution list; 3) you will then receive an email asking you to confirm; and 4) you will then need to follow the link to confirm.

## **5. Individual Properties: Key Regulations And How to Get Things Done**

As with other homeowner associations, each homeowner property (referred to as an "Exclusive Use Area" or "EUA" in the Bellows Farm Master Deed and Declaration of Trust) is subject to regulations that include but are not limited to:

- a) Exterior House Maintenance and Modifications
- b) Landscape Maintenance and Modifications
- c) Approval Process and Forms
- d) Violations and Penalties

### **a) Exterior House Maintenance and Modifications**

All maintenance to the house and grounds associated with each EUA shall be the homeowner's responsibility. Each property must be maintained in a manner commensurate with a first class residential community as outlined in the Master Deed and Declaration of Trust. Paint, clapboards, trim, roofs, walkways, stone walls, fences, driveways and other structures should be well-maintained at all times.

The Master Deed and Declaration of Trust require that residents submit any proposed exterior modifications to the Board for their review and approval. Exterior modifications would include painting, clapboard and trim repair, roofs, walkways, fencing, driveways, solar panels, generators, patios, in-ground fire pits etc. Any proposed changes to expand your home must also be reviewed and approved by the Board.

### **b) Landscape Maintenance and Modifications**

Landscaping of each EUA is the homeowner's responsibility and should be managed by you and/or a firm of your choice. Certain modifications to your landscaping (e.g. rock walls, removal of trees with a diameter greater than 10 inches, etc) are also subject to the association's Master Deed and require Board review and approval.

Generally, grass should be kept 2-3" long and kept free from excessive weeds. Ornamental plantings should be pruned to maintain their attractiveness. Plantings and

trees should not protrude into sidewalk common areas. Gardens and areas landscaped with mulch or stone should be kept free from weeds.

***Yard waste should never be disposed of on any common area.*** Yard waste should be bagged and placed at the curb for weekly pick-up by the association's landscaper. Large yard waste that does not fit into waste bags should be removed by: 1) having it hauled away by a hired contractor for a fee, or 2) taking it to the Acton transfer station for \$15/yr (see <https://www.acton-ma.gov/149/Transfer-Station-Recycling-Center>). Disposal options for Holiday trees will be communicated by Alpine.

#### **c) Approval Process and Forms**

As set forth in the Master Deed (Section 10b) and the By-Laws (Article V, Section 5.9), homeowners must secure the Board's approval prior to making certain modifications to their home. Homeowners must first provide Alpine written notice of all proposed exterior and grounds related modifications. Proposals will then be reviewed by the Board. In addition, deed restrictions shown on your EUA Plot Plan specify no build and no cut zones within your EUA that you should be familiar with before seeking approval from the Board. All modifications shall be completed within 6 months of approval.

All forms for paint changes and exterior modifications to your property are on Alpine's website. These must be completed and submitted to Alpine Management for the Board's review and approval:

- The Bellows Farm Homeowners Association Paint Policy
- The Paint Change Request Form
- Bellows Farm Homeowners Association Suggested Paint Colors
- Architectural Modification Form for all other proposed exterior/property improvements (e.g. roof replacement, porch/deck/patio replacements and extensions, driveway modifications, solar panel, generators, tree cutting, in-ground fire pits, etc)

Please submit forms to Elizabeth Kidawski at [EKC@AlpineManagement.com](mailto:EKC@AlpineManagement.com) **at least 2 weeks prior** to your proposed project start date.

#### **d. Other Key Regulations**

**Signs** – No signs other than “For Sale”, “For Lease, or “For Rent” (not to exceed 2 sq. ft.) are allowed on or around your property.

**Garages** – Garages are designated for vehicles and cannot be converted to living space without the approval of the Board.

**Animals** – No livestock is permitted. Domestic animals are permitted in reasonable quantities such reasonableness as determined by the Board.

**Fences** – May be installed subject to Board approval. No chain link fences will be permitted. No fence or wall higher than 4 ft shall be installed on the front of any

property. No fence or wall higher than 6 ft shall be installed on any portion of any property.

**Swimming Pools** – No above ground swimming pools shall be installed. In ground pools may be installed subject to Board approval.

**Parking** – Shall be in your designated garage area, driveway, clubhouse and pool parking lots or on any of the 3 public roads in the Bellows Farm (Davis Road, Briar Hill Road and Bellows Farm Road).

**Storage** – No waste, refuse or other storage containers shall be stored outside on your property or on any common area. Temporary exceptions may be permitted with written advance notice and approval by the Board. Examples include temporary storage “PODs” and appropriate composting receptacles.

**Vehicle Storage** – Commercial vehicles, recreational vehicles, trailers and unregistered vehicles shall not be stored in the EUA or adjacent streets and common areas.

**Solar Panels, Satellite Dishes and Generators** – May be installed subject to Board approval

**Leasing** – Leasing is allowed subject to the provisions of the Master Deed and Condominium Trust

**e. Violations and Fines for Non-Compliance** – In the event that the owner fails after fifteen (15) days written notice to remediate any condition in the EUA the Board may undertake at the owners expense, plus a ten (10) percent administration fee, any work that they deem required and appropriate to return the EUA to a condition which is in compliance with the provisions of the Master Deed and Condominium Trust. The Board shall give notice to owners prior to levying any fines. Fines shall not exceed \$50 per day per violation.

## **6. Common Areas: What, Where and How They Are Used**

The Bellows Farm common areas and facilities include the sewer system, 18 private roads, and 17 Common Areas which are designated open spaces for recreational use and recreational facilities (pool, field, clubhouse, fitness center and tennis courts). The Board is responsible for maintaining all common areas, private roads and recreational facilities in the Bellows Farm community. The Town of Acton is responsible for maintaining the 3 public roads: Davis Road, Bellows Farm Road and Briar Hill Road.

The map below shows the location of the 17 Bellows Farm ‘s Common Areas. The following sections outline key regulations and restrictions that govern these common areas.



## **Bellows Farm Map: 117 EUAs and 17 Common Areas A-O, Q, R**



Bellows Farm has 17 Common Areas. Common Area M includes the pool, the fitness center, the tennis courts, two parking lots and the field.

### **What are the common areas for? What are the restrictions of use?**

The common areas are to be used as open spaces for lawful and passive recreation. (Passive recreation means that activities do not disturb wildlife or property.) Common areas are to be used by Bellows Farm community members and their accompanied guests only. Common areas are for the use of all community members and activities in these spaces need to be respectful and considerate of nearby neighbors.

The association's Master Deed does not allow homeowners to dump debris on any of the open common areas. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Garbage
- Trees, tree limbs/branches, Christmas trees
- Bushes
- Grass clippings, leaves
- Furniture
- Basketball hoops
- Lawn mowing equipment, spreaders, gas cans, etc
- Other materials



### **Where can I park?**

Parking is in designated areas only. This includes your driveway, parking lots at the clubhouse and pool, and on the 3 town roads , - Davis Road, Briar Hill, and Bellow Farm Road. Parking on common areas is not permitted except for at the pool and clubhouse. Parking is also not permitted on the 18 private roads in the Bellows Farm community.

### **What is the speed limit in the neighborhood?**

Due to a thickly settled and thriving neighborhood the speed limit is 20 mph. Practicing safe driving is essential to keep all community members safe, please do your part!

## **7. Bellows Farm Association Services**

- a) **Snow removal:** The association's contractor plows our 18 private roads, sidewalks, and parking lots at the clubhouse. The contractor also shovels out around fire hydrants and mailboxes. The contractor should start snow removal when there is approximately 1 inch of snow on the ground. Once the storm ends, the contractor then focuses on clean-up. Roadways will be totally cleaned and snow piles removed if needed. Sidewalks will be cleared once the roadways are cleared. The contractor is expected to keep the private roadways, sidewalks and entryways to the Clubhouse adequately sanded.
- b) **Landscaping of common areas:** Spring and fall clean-ups, pruning, mulching and weekly mowing.
- c) **Yard waste pick-up:** Homeowners' yard waste can be 1) hauled away by the homeowner's landscaper or 2) bagged and placed at the curb on the day of the weekly pick-up by the association's landscaper. Yard waste pick-up by the association's landscaper will generally begin by April 30<sup>th</sup> and end by early December. Yard waste should never be disposed of outside of your EUA.
- d) **Weekly trash pick-up:** Trash and recycling is managed by the property management firm and occurs weekly, generally on Friday, subject to change upon prior notification. Recycling is single stream meaning that paper and plastic may be comingled.
  - Trash/recycling pick-up generally begins by 7 am. Covered bins should be placed at the end of your driveway on the day of pick-up and removed by the end of pick-up day.
  - Disposal of large items or those outside the profile of normal trash, can be arranged through the property manager or your hired third party contractor.
  - ***Note:** Access to the Acton Transfer Station can be purchased for personal disposal of trash, yard waste and large items at the Acton municipal facility. <https://www.acton-ma.gov/149/Transfer-Station-Recycling-Center>*

- e) **Clubhouse:** The clubhouse is available for reservation for appropriate use pursuant to the reservation policy. Clubhouse rental does not include access to the pool, fitness room or tennis courts. Events should be supervised at all times by an adult and no alcohol shall be served to those under 21 years old.
- Homeowners who want to reserve the clubhouse need to contact Liz at Email: [EDC@AlpineManagement.com](mailto:EDC@AlpineManagement.com) , Tel: 978-371-9090 x10 for availability. Once the reservation is confirmed, a refundable deposit of \$100, rental fee of \$25 and signed contract should be sent to Alpine Management.
  - Homeowners are responsible for cleaning the clubhouse and ensuring that all garbage has been removed from the clubhouse and field.
  - No vehicles are allowed on the field. Cars are to be parked in the 2 parking lots or along David Road.
- f) **Pool:** The pool opens on Memorial Day weekend and closes on Labor Day. Residents may use the pool without a lifeguard on duty and swim at their own risk. Children under 18 years of old may not use the pool without adult supervision. A complete list of pool rules is communicated annually prior to the pool opening. Key rules include:
- All posted rules must be followed. Violators may lose their pool privileges.
  - All residents are required to sign in, indicating name, address and guests
  - Glass and alcohol are not allowed in the pool area. Pool parties not permitted.
  - The pool is for the use of the Bellows Farm community and their guests only.
- g) **Fitness Room:** The fitness room can be accessed at any time by key. Every house in Bellows Farm is issued a key that opens the pool and fitness room. Children under 16 years old cannot use the fitness room without supervision of an adult. Separate shoes must be worn when exercising. Please be considerate and clean the space after you use it.
- h) **Tennis Courts:** Tennis courts are not reserved but are used on a “first come first serve” basis. Please be considerate of your neighbors if they are waiting to play. Bikes, skateboards, scooters and roller blades, etc. must not be used on the tennis courts.

## 8. APPENDIX A – Quick Reference Guide

### **Alpine Management Contact:**

Elizabeth Kidawski, Property Manager  
Tel: 978-371-9090 x21

Website: [www.alpinemanagement.com](http://www.alpinemanagement.com)

Email: [ekc@AlpineManagement.com](mailto:ekc@AlpineManagement.com)

Fax: 978-369-1951

### **When to Contact Alpine**

1. Questions about by-laws, process and forms
2. How to pay monthly condo fees, request a payment coupon booklet
3. How to sign into their website, create an account, search for a document
4. Submit a) Exterior Paint Request Form and b) Architectural Modification Form (e.g. for roof replacement, tree cutting, etc) for Board's review and approval
5. Clubhouse rental process and forms
6. Sale of home
7. Submitting proxies for Trustee elections prior to the Annual meeting
8. Suggestions for common area improvements, feedback and complaints

### **How to Stay Informed**

1. **Alpine Management's website**, [www.alpinemanagement.com](http://www.alpinemanagement.com). You will need your account number (on your condo fee payment coupon). If you don't have your number, contact Nancy Flaherty at [nab@alpinemanagement.com](mailto:nab@alpinemanagement.com). The website has a Resource Center tab which contains the Association's Governing Documents and homeowner association and a Resident Services tab which includes key forms.
2. **Bellows Farm Newsletter**: The Board of Trustees distributes a community newsletter 4 times annually.
3. **Bellows Farm Yahoo Forum**:
  - To join the Yahoo group: 1) email the forum's administrator, Eric Shen, at [ericshenus@gmail.com](mailto:ericshenus@gmail.com). Eric is a longtime resident of Bellows Farm. Your email should contain your name, email and house address; 2) Eric will then add you to the distribution list; 3) you will then receive an email asking you to confirm; and 4) you will then need to follow the link to confirm.

### **Key Bellows Farm Regulations**

Please refer to the full handbook and website for more details on the Bellows Farm Master Deed and Declaration of Trust used for governing our homeowners' association. Key regulations include, but are not limited to:

1. No dumping of debris on any common area
2. Exterior modifications to your home and property (e.g. painting, new roof shingles, tree cutting, etc) require review and approval by the Board.
3. Property must be properly maintained consistent with a first class community
4. Sign restrictions on homeowners' property.

5. Garages cannot be converted to living space
6. No livestock is permitted
7. Fence restrictions, including no chain link fences
8. No above ground swimming pools
9. Parking in designated areas only. Parking on common areas is not permitted except for at the pool and clubhouse. No parking on private roads.
10. What can be stored on your property
11. Vehicle storage restrictions
12. Solar panels, satellite dishes and generators require approval
13. Leasing is allowed subject to restrictions
14. Penalties for By-Law violations

### Approvals

Board approval is required for exterior house and landscape modifications. Please refer to the Community Handbook, as well as the Master Deed and Declaration of Trust on Alpine's website [www.alpinemanagement.com](http://www.alpinemanagement.com) , for more details and approval forms. Please submit forms to Elizabeth Kidawski at [EKC@AlpineManagement.com](mailto:EKC@AlpineManagement.com) **at least 2 weeks prior** to your start date.

### Bellows Farm Community Map: 117 EUAs and 17 Common Areas A-O, Q, R



Bellows Farm has 17 Common Areas. Common Area M includes the pool, the fitness center, the tennis courts, two parking lots and the field.

**Bellocs Farm Association Services**

1. Snow removal
2. Landscaping of common areas
3. Bagged yard waste pick-up
4. Weekly trash pickup
5. Clubhouse (with wifi)
6. Pool with lifeguards
7. Fitness room
8. Tennis courts
9. Community Newsletters