

THE BEARS NECESSITIES

The Quarterly Newsletter of Bears Crossing Community

Issue #8 / October 2024



What's
in the
name?

BY AMY SYRACUSE, EDITOR

I wonder how many people put “community” on their list of priorities when shopping for a second home. Bears Crossing stands out among Mount Snow’s many residential developments for this very designation. Look at branding for other local neighborhoods, and you’ll see words like “townhomes,” “condominiums,” “village,” or simply “(fill in the blank) at Mount Snow.” You’ll seldom see the term “community” that’s featured so prominently on our entrance sign.

So what’s different about Bears Crossing? And which came first: our “community” branding or the neighborly spirit that sets us apart? Based on the original 1980s signs featured in our recent sign auction (see page 6), it’s safe to say that Bears Crossing was branded a community long before ground was broken on its many homes. But, to paraphrase Kevin Costner in Field of Dreams, “if you build it, they will come.”

This newsletter is filled with examples of the community-minded place Bears Crossing is today. In this edition, you’ll read about:

- Our holiday fundraiser to benefit Deerfield Valley neighbors in need;
- Information and recommendations from property owners, who generously share their time, talent, and enthusiasm to make Bears Crossing the best it can be;
- A heartfelt tribute to longtime onsite manager John Brunen;
- A recap of our Annual Owners Meeting, itself an exercise in teamwork and constructive dialogue; and so much more.

So, whether or not you came to Bears Crossing for the community, I hope you’ll indulge me in a few moments of gratitude for the many gifts it offers while you peruse these pages.

The Bears Necessities is produced and owned by the Bears Crossing HOA (BCHOA). Find the BCHOA disclaimer and usage restrictions [here](#).

W&B Update: Thinking (and Planning for) Snow

BY GEORGE FRIEND, PROPERTY MANAGER

After a relatively quick leaf season, stick season is settling in. That can only mean ski season is around the corner. If you’re already thinking snow, you’ll be happy to hear that your property management team has been hard at work getting Bears Crossing ready for the winter.



We’ve had discussions with Mount Snow about maintenance of the Ski Home Trail and have a contract with the mountain in place. The mountain recently cut back the trail, making it wider and safer. We hope to have a well-groomed trail throughout the season. Meanwhile, the MOOver schedule has been finalized (get a [preview online](#)). Service begins on Saturday, Nov. 30th. Hard copies of the schedule will be available before the season begins.

For those eagerly awaiting their first fireside nap of the season, firewood has been stacked on all porches. If you run out before the season ends, you’ll have one more shot at the woodshed. That opportunity will be self-serve or you can contact W&B to arrange to have wood delivered and stacked at a cost.

We’re continuing with the same contractors we’ve had for the past four years for plowing and shoveling. *Please keep in mind... there are 127 walkways and porches to shovel, plus community amenities and common areas.* Patience is required during storms. It’s wise to keep a shovel and a bucket of sand nearby, in case it’s needed while you wait for the shoveling crew to reach your home.

Since winter is our busiest season, expect the trash and recycling facilities to receive heavy use. You can help things run smoothly by following procedures for proper waste disposal. Remind guests that we don’t have trash pickup, and make sure they understand how to use the waste disposal equipment. People often forget that bears can be out into early December. Even when it’s cold, trash must be secured. Detailed instructions for trash, recycling, and composting are on www.BearsCrossing.com. Anything other than household trash, compost, or recycling must be taken to the Dorr Fitch Road transfer station.

I’d be remiss if I didn’t say a word about parking, which becomes tougher when we have more visitors and less space due to snow banks. Only two vehicles per household may be parked in front of condo units. Additional vehicles must be left in designated [overflow parking](#) areas—*NOT on lawns, the sides of roads, at the base of the Ski Home Trail, or anywhere that could impede access for emergency responders.*

When it storms, think about where snow gets pushed by plows and park accordingly. Plows are here on a per-storm and as-needed basis. When you see them out working right after a storm, it’s a good idea to move your vehicle so they can clear the area. If vehicles aren’t moved, the snow will remain until the following day, when final clean-up is done.

Finally, if challenges arise, please keep up that community spirit. Get to know your neighbors and exchange contact details, so you can work together to navigate parking and other issues.

The More The Merrier: BX Merch Sale Returns for the Holidays

By popular demand, we're bringing back our Bears Crossing Apparel Fundraiser just in time for the holiday season. And while you shop for the *coziest* Bears Crossing logo sweatshirts for everyone on your gift list, you'll also be supporting a wonderful cause: the Windham County Toys for Tots 2024 holiday toy drive.

The fundraiser closes Nov. 1st, so don't delay. Visit our [CustomInk.com shop](https://www.customink.com/shop) to choose from a selection of Bella and Canvas Ultra Soft crewneck sweatshirts and pullover hoodies, including new color options. Adult and youth sizes are available. Purchases can be shipped to you (fee applies) or delivered to Bears Crossing for pickup in the Community from late November through December. The fundraiser is being spearheaded by Board member and E/F Association President Melissa Passeck.

All money raised will go to [Windham County Toys for Tots](https://www.windhamcountytoysfortots.org). This year marks the charity's seventh toy drive to help area families in need. Last year, it provided gifts for more than 1,600 children in Windham County. A contribution from Bears Crossing would be meaningful, enabling the group to provide even more holiday cheer for the 2024 season, according to Jay Aubuchon, Windham County Toys for Tots coordinator.

Passeck hopes this fundraiser will match or even exceed the funds raised by Bears Crossing's apparel sale in 2023. That effort raised \$2,350 to fund the purchase of an electronic medical safe box for Deerfield Valley Rescue. She encourages owners to share the sale with interested friends and family. Together, we can make a real difference for this wonderful organization and the families it serves. --AS

Dear John...

BY MIKE GOODMAN, BOARD SECRETARY

In September, W&B hosted a party to recognize John Brunen's service to Bears Crossing and other communities in its property management portfolio. Though John will continue working with W&B, he's stepping back from day-to-day involvement in the communities. The occasion gathered more than a dozen Bears Crossing owners, along with John, Colleen Lorenz (former BX owner and John's "better half"), the W&B team, and other local friends at 1846 Tavern, where toasts were made and memories shared.

If you arrived in Bears Crossing during the post-John Brunen era, here's a bit of history. When Cary and I bought our Polar Bear North condo in 2000, John was the onsite manager, face of Wallace Property Management, but really, the face of Bears Crossing. If we wanted to know something—and we didn't know *ANYTHING*—we'd walk to Polar Bear South, where we'd find John idling in his truck with his laptop, and ask. Much of our formative connection to the Community was shaped by those interactions.

I think most would agree that John can portray a crusty exterior. But get to know him and he betrays the many wonderful layers beneath; he's a thoughtful, insightful, loyal friend with a wry sense of humor. One of my favorite stories is from nine years ago, shortly after our first grandchild, Rose, was born. I was walking her in a stroller up Bears Den Road when John drove by and stopped. I started to introduce Rose, and John told me that he's uncomfortable with babies. In general, he said, he doesn't think they're particularly cute, but feels obligated to look and tell the parent "...what a cute baby." Then, he peered into the stroller, looked up, smiled, and said "...what a cute baby."

Cary and I had many reasons for buying at Bears Crossing. But we've stayed for 24+ years because of the Community and the friends we've made here. For us, John initially was the Community, and he's been a dear friend through the years. We wish him well.



New color and style options are available.

Planning Ahead

Oct. 19 - [Dover Day](#) at Dover Town Hall

Oct. 26-27 - [Rotary Club Winter Sports Sale](#) at Mount Snow Sundance Base Lodge

Nov. 30 - Bears Crossing's [MOOver service](#) begins

Dec. 14 - Bears Crossing Board Meeting, 3pm at Clubhouse; Bears Crossing Holiday Beer Swap, 8pm at Clubhouse. Details to follow.

Feb. 22 - Bears Crossing Community Ski Race at Mount Snow. Details to follow.

Check the Bears Crossing Community and Bears Crossing HOA Facebook groups for announcements about Community outings. Board meeting details can be found [here](#). For upcoming Deerfield Valley events, visit the [Chamber of Commerce Calendar](#).



Follow Us

Bears Crossing's Homeowners Association has launched a private Facebook group for Bears Crossing property owners only. The group will complement e-mail updates owners currently receive from W&B, and serve as the official source for Bears Crossing HOA and community news on social media. To be included in the group, visit www.facebook.com/groups/bearscrossingvthoa and submit a request to join. Requests will be checked to confirm your ownership status, and all members *must* review and agree to the group's rules and standards of conduct in order to join. If your initial request to join was declined, it's because you forgot to complete both of these steps. At your convenience, please resubmit your request with the questions and rules acknowledgement completed.

2024-25 Propane Rate

For condos and single family homes that are contracted with Superior Plus to provide propane, the Bears Crossing-negotiated 2024-25 fuel rate beginning with the September billing cycle is \$1.70 per gallon, including taxes and fees. The 2023-24 rate was \$1.81 per gallon. SFH homeowners are encouraged to check their bills to ensure they are being charged the correct rate. Special thanks to Joe Lodi and Rich Werner for their hard work and diligent negotiating.

2024 SFH Beautification Reports Coming Soon

Each fall, members of the Beautification Committee, including Beautification Chair Joe Lodi, Property Manager George Friend, and SFH Association President Amy Syracuse, do a walk-around inspection of single family home properties. The Committee notes wear, rot, and other property damage, with the goal of helping homeowners prevent manageable problems from becoming unmanageable ones. This year's inspections took place on Saturday, Sept. 28th. In the coming weeks, homeowners will receive a letter and observation summary by e-mail from George Friend *only if significant issues were identified*. Please contact George at grf@wbmvt.com with questions, to receive photos of documented damage, to request contractor recommendations, and/or to learn about work that can be arranged through W&B.



On the Board: Special Thanks and Meetings for 2024-25

BY DAVE STREETER, BOARD PRESIDENT

Hello, Bears Crossing neighbors. I want to begin by extending a big “thank you” to everyone who participated in this year’s Annual Owners Meeting, either in person, on Zoom, or by sending in your proxies and ballots. It’s an important event—one that keeps owners at the heart of everything happening in our Community. Your participation and support are appreciated.

In case you missed it, my report at that meeting was relatively brief. Above all, I wanted to recognize the hard work and dedication over the past year of W&B Property Management, 802 Dirt Works, our gardening and snow removal crews, and our Board members and many committee volunteers. I know I’m biased but, if you spend any amount of time in our Community, it’s pretty clear that Bears Crossing is a remarkable place. That doesn’t just happen; it takes a village. We’re fortunate to have a great one.

All of us on the Board of Directors are committed to keeping the Community remarkable as we work together over this 2024-25 fiscal year. This year’s Board (made up of the members listed below) will meet in the clubhouse on the following dates:

- Saturday, Dec. 14 @ 3pm
- Saturday, Feb. 15 @ 3pm
- Saturday, May 17 @ 9am
- Saturday, July 19 @ 9am
- Saturday, Aug. 16 @ 9am (Annual Budget Meeting)
- Saturday, Sept. 27 @ 9am (Annual Owners Meeting)

We’ll continue offering a Zoom option for meetings, and W&B will provide owners with those access details and meeting agendas in advance via e-mail. I look forward to seeing you there or around Bears Crossing this winter.



2024-2025 Board of Directors

Dave Streeter, President
Mike Goodman, Secretary
Mimi White, Treasurer
Scott Abrams
Ian Danby
Elliot Isban
Joe Lodi
Andy Stepan
Bob Stone

Condo and SFH Association Presidents:
Michael Fichera (100 Association)
John Luttrell (C/D Association)
Rick Nitschke (400/500 Association)
Melissa Passeck (E/F Association)
Amy Syracuse (SFH Association)
Don Wenz (A/B Association)

In Case You Missed it: Annual Owners Meeting Recap

This year's Annual Owners Meeting, held Saturday, Sept. 21st, brought together Bears Crossing owners from near and far at Dover Town Hall and via Zoom. The meeting, which lasted several hours, featured the following speakers:

- **Laura Sibilia**, who represents the Windham-2 District in Vermont's House of Representatives, discussed challenges and opportunities facing the district, which includes Dover, Jamaica, Somerset, Stratton, and Wardsboro. She also fielded questions from owners about diverse topics, including state tax rates, representation for second homeowners, Vermont's affordable housing shortage, etc.
- **Brian Urquhart**, Mount Snow's Director of Food and Beverage, updated owners on plans for the coming season, including the launch of the My Epic Gear membership program at Mount Snow and the return of the fan favorite Bullwheel Mug Club.
- **Bears Crossing Owner Will Galway** reminded owners about the YourCourts.com online reservation system for Bears Crossing's tennis and pickleball court and encouraged owners to sign up to use it.



W&B Owner Rich Werner speaks to owners during the 2024 Annual Meeting at Dover Town Hall on Sept. 21st.

For regular business, Dave Streeter delivered the President's report, and Treasurer Mimi White reviewed the 2024-25 budget. See the adjacent "2024 Budget Summary" sidebar for details on that discussion. Finally, George Friend provided a property management update from W&B. A draft of meeting minutes and the approved budget can be found in [W&B's owners' portal](#). --AS

2024-25 Budget Summary

BY MIMI WHITE, BOARD TREASURER

Bears Crossings' Master Association budget, approved at our Sept. 21st annual owners meeting, is now available for viewing when you log into [W&B's website](#). For those who prefer a summary, here are the highlights.

Our overall operating budget increased by 3%, mostly due to contractual agreements with vendors. Higher HOA fees for 2024-25 are largely the result of an increased contribution to our capital reserve. Not including the pickleball court, which was funded entirely by special assessment, 2024 capital spending was higher than typical years due to needed road and walkway repairs. As a result, our capital reserve had dropped below the recommended level of 70-100% of the operating budget.

The Board's proposed budget originally included funds designated for repaving Bears Den Road, which is expected to be needed in approximately five years, to avoid a special assessment at the time of the project. This was not approved by a majority of owners. Instead, a motion passed to contribute \$75,000 to the general capital reserve, up from last year's \$40,000 contribution. This year's capital reserve contribution will cover projects like finishing the clubhouse patio, tree removal in common areas, and other road and ski trail repairs, in addition to ensuring capital reserve funding meets the recommended range. It does not specifically contribute to the repaving of Bears Den Road.

Holding Court: How to Access our Tennis and Pickleball Reservation System

The number of days left in Bears Crossing's 2024 pickleball and tennis season is falling as fast as the leaves and temperatures. But you can get a head start on next season by downloading the YourCourts.com reservation app now. In five minutes or less, you'll be ready to book time to play when the court reopens in the spring. Simply follow these steps:

1. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/BXCourt> to create a YourCourts.com account and password. (Don't forget to write down your login information or, even better, save that to your device to streamline future logins.)
2. Iphone users can download the app here: <https://tinyurl.com/YourCourtsiPhoneApp>. Meanwhile, Android folks can access their app download here: <https://tinyurl.com/YourCourtsAndroidApp>
3. Log into the app on your phone to see the court calendar and reserve time.

The reservation system doesn't prevent walk-on use, but gives reservations priority over walk-ons in case there's a conflict. According to Will Galway, one key benefit is the Community will be able to understand court usage, which can inform future planning. The system also makes it easy to schedule open play times, clinics, and bracketed tournaments, so be on the lookout for details about these and other on court events after the snow and ice thaw! --AS



Owners enjoyed some open play time during the Annual Meeting weekend.

New Dover STR Ordinance Takes Effect, Establishes Rentals Registration Process

BY WILL GALWAY (BEARS DEN ROAD)

This month, Dover passed a Short Term Rental (STR) Ordinance, which will require any owner operating a Short Term Rental for more than 14 days a year to obtain a permit from the town. The ordinance goes into effect this fall, and STR owners will receive a letter with instructions on what to do from Deckard Technologies, the vendor managing Dover's STR registrations. For now, below is an overview of the system. To read the full ordinance, [click here](#).

Q. How does one obtain a permit?

A. The exact details are still being built out, but there will be an initial registration process that STR owners will need to follow. This includes some requirements that will have to be met before a permit can be issued. The permit fee is \$125 per year, and will need to be renewed annually. More information on the permit process will be posted soon on the town of [Dover's website](#).

Q. What are the STR requirements for a permit?

A. To operate an STR in Dover, an owner will need to:

1. Register for a permit, and renew it annually.
2. Fill out the [VT Short Term Rental Safety, Health and Financial Obligations](#) form and post it in the unit. For STRs hosting more than eight guests, a Vermont State Fire Inspection must also be successfully passed and that certificate obtained and posted.
3. Post an emergency contact list in the unit, with phone numbers for a local contact/property manager and for police, the fire department, etc.
4. Designate an "Assigned Point of Contact (APC)." This is an individual or organization authorized by the STR owner to address emergency situations and other matters when the STR is being rented or leased as such. The APC must be able to respond to emergencies within one hour as they are responsible for responding to issues or complaints and for facilitating STR access for emergency responders.
5. Provide bear-proof garbage cans, if applicable.



Q. Can George be my Assigned Point of Contact?

A. No. You'll need to find someone local (a handyman, perhaps?) or a property management company to serve this function. We expect local providers will pop up specifically to fill this need.

Q. What does this mean for us in Bears Crossing?

All Dover residences looking to rent for more than 14 days per calendar year are required to obtain the permit and to renew it each year. This includes us at Bears Crossing. This requirement is in addition to the normal STR rules that we have through the HOA. The bear-proof garbage requirement is not applicable, because we have a community dumpster. Also, many STR owners in Bears Crossing have already requested and received Vermont State Fire Inspection certificates in accordance with our existing HOA rules.

Pro Tips for Hosting Guests and Renters in Bears Crossing

BY GEORGE FRIEND, PROPERTY MANAGER

Once snow begins to fall, Bears Crossing's busy season kicks in. Expect to see more owners visiting more regularly and many more guests, including season and short-term renters. If you plan to host newcomers to the Community in your home, please observe the following suggestions to make their stay as enjoyable and stress-free as possible... for *both* of you!

- Post the current season's [MOOver schedule](#), and make sure guests are aware that the service doesn't run every day.
- Let guests know where to wait for MOOver pick-up, and [share tips for the ride](#) (e.g., skis stored in back, poles and boards carried on, what to do if the MOOver is full, etc).
- Remind guests about speed limits, driving protocol (e.g., don't pass the MOOver when passengers are boarding or exiting), and that all-wheel drive and snow tires are **strongly recommended**. Nothing ruins a ski weekend like waiting hours for a tow truck!
- Educate guests on how to use Bears Crossing's [trash, recycling, and composting facilities](#).
- Share [pet rules](#) before guests arrive, if applicable. *Note that pets are not permitted in short-term rentals, and require pre-approval for renters staying longer than 30 days. Permitted pets must be kept on leash and pet waste MUST be picked up and properly disposed of.*
- Explain [parking procedures](#) (especially for condos) and provide a [community map](#) well before check in. Parking can be confusing for those new to the neighborhood, especially if they arrive outside daylight hours.



BearsCrossing.com has many guest resources, including this one-page Visitors Guide. To access it, [click on the image above](#) or go to www.bearscrossing.com/guests/.

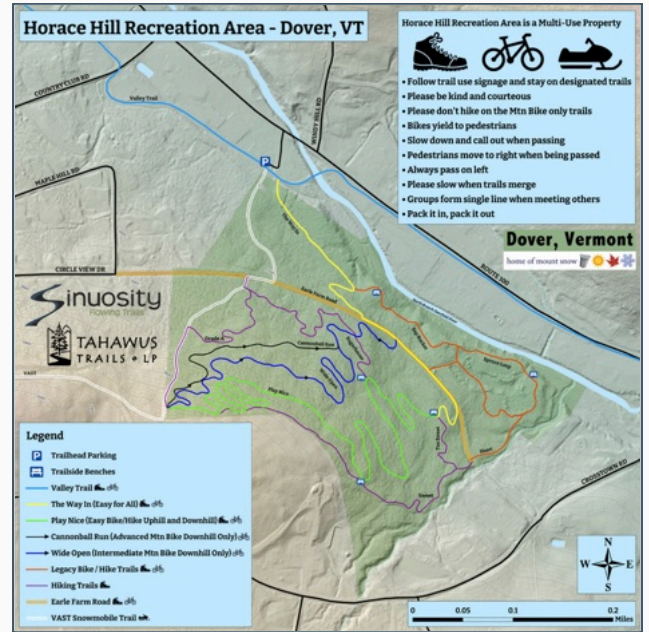
West Dover's New Horace Hill Recreation Area Offers Something for Everyone

BY SCOTT ABRAMS (BLACK BEAR LANE)

The hottest new recreational area in West Dover is Horace Hill. This hidden bit of forest has everything! If you're not familiar with Horace Hill, it's probably because you can't really see it from the road. The entrance is right off the bike path that parallels Route 100, only 2.3 miles from Bears Crossing.

The best landmark is a building containing Janine's Home & Style Boutique on the west side of Route 100, a little south of Country Club Road. There's a driveway that goes into a large parking lot. The 53-acre property was purchased by the town in 2019. It's named after Horace B. Earle, who owned a sugarbush farm there. Some primitive trails were created and blazed, and the area was initially planned for backcountry skiing.

But, in 2023, the town hired two companies to completely update the area. Now you'll see a welcome sign at the trailhead with a map and information just a little farther ahead. Continue on and you'll find some beautifully graded trails that snake-path up the hill, surrounded by serene old woods.



Source: [Sinuosity Facebook Page](#)



Brumm's Way's Helene Wolson biked the new trails in August.

Hiking shoes and poles aren't necessary. There are both singular and multi-use trails for hiking and biking, and all of the trails have signs explaining both the allowed activities and how difficult they are. If you're a fan of the old-school rougher blazed trails, there are still some of those you can enjoy, as well.

In non-winter months, you can also hike and bike along the connecting VAST trails, which take you to new places. But that's not all! The area also includes an 18-hole disc golf course that meanders into the woods. Find details at <https://udisc.com/courses/horace-hill-dgc-vQhB>. The tee boxes and baskets are all set up and work should now be complete. The course will even be on the Vermont disc golf tournament schedule.

Best of all, the fun doesn't stop when the snow begins to fall. In winter, you can swap out bikes for snowshoes or cross country and backcountry skis, and enjoy the trail network in a whole new way. Horace Hill is a year-round gem that's close by with lots of parking, and free to enjoy for everyone. For a trail map and more information on the Horace Hill Recreation area, go to <https://www.discoverdover.com/recreation> or click on the map above.

From Trash to Treasure: Sign Auction Raises \$2,345 for Community Capital Reserve

At this year's Annual Meeting, Bears Crossing owners had the chance to participate in an online auction of 15 vintage community signs. These beautifully weathered pieces of Bears Crossing history had been gathering dust in a storage area. With an eye toward raising money for future community projects—and the belief that every little bit helps—property manager George Friend hauled the signs (some as big as 4' by 6') to the clubhouse. After a light cleaning, they were set up for display in the clubhouse during the Annual Owners Meeting weekend.

Owners could bid on their phones from wherever they happened to be through a free online auction platform. For some streets, bidding was frenzied. (I'm looking at you, Bear Paw Left and Black Bear Lane!) For others, there were some bargains to be found. All 15 signs have found new homes, and the auction raised \$2,345, which has been put back into our capital reserve—a win for the entire Community. --AS



One of 15 signs auctioned off, this 1980s sales office sign showcases Bears Crossing's earliest branding. It found a new home in a property on Brumm's Way.