

## Recommended Neighborhood Standards March 21, 2016

The North Springfield community has been a well-kept neighborhood for over 60 years because of the pride its residents have taken in making it an ideal place to live. Yards have been maintained, and properties have largely been kept free of clutter. When the community was originally founded in 1955, covenants were put in place to protect the “value and desirability” of the homes in the neighborhood. The covenants reflect Fairfax County zoning laws at the time they were written. Since these covenants are frequently no longer conveyed during home sales as they were originally intended to be, NSCA is establishing a list of recommended neighborhood standards that we are asking residents to live by.

**1. GRASS:** Fairfax County Code §119-3-1 restricts grass or lawns from exceeding a height of 12-inches. It is recommended that grass be cut frequently, so lawns do not look unsightly, particularly during the months of March-November.

**2. LANDSCAPING/GREENERY:** Residents are encouraged to keep bushes and other greenery trimmed to a reasonable height. This is especially important with regard to invasive plants such as ivy along property lines. Residents are also asked to periodically drain standing water in things such as bird baths, wading pools, and clogged gutters since they are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

**3. VEHICULAR PARKING:** Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance 11-100 does not permit grass parking in the front yards of homes, and driveways on lots the size of those in North Springfield may not exceed more than 30% of the front yard. Parking must be done in surfaced areas such as driveways and or the street. Additionally, Virginia Code 46.2-889 requires that vehicles must be parked facing the direction of the travel lane. Inoperable motor vehicles may not be kept uncovered outdoors, per Fairfax County Code §110.

**4. OUTDOOR STORAGE:** Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance 10-100 does not permit outdoor storage of items (junk, debris, or otherwise) in the front yard, including under carports. Storage must be done in accessory structures (i.e. sheds) located “on the rear half of the law, screened from the view from the first story window of any neighboring dwelling, and the total area for such outdoor storage [must] not occupy more than 100 square feet.” Curbside trash must also be disposed of within a week, per Fairfax County Code §109.1-3-1. This may require a special collection arrangement through your private trash collector.

**5. FENCES:** Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance 10-100 restricts fence height to no taller than seven (7) feet from the highest point on the side and rear of the yard with the exception of corner lots, which are restricted to a height of four (4) feet.

**6. BUILDING PERMITS:** The Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services provides a list online of when permits are needed for construction projects. They should be consulted before any additions or work to your home is done in order to avoid costly penalties on top of construction costs.

**7. DAMAGED AND BLIGHTED PROPERTY:** Part III of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code requires that the interiors and exteriors of homes be maintained. Damaged homes that include broken windows, fallen gutters, missing siding, and significant damage to the inside can be reported to the Fairfax County of Code Compliance. Similarly,

blighted properties (i.e. properties in a dilapidated condition or no longer regularly maintained) should also be reported.

**8. OCCUPANCY:** Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance 2-500 regulates the number of occupants in a home. Suspected boarding houses should be reported to the Department of Code Compliance. Generally speaking, the following is permitted:

Option 1: A married or blood-related family with any number of children provided there are no more than two occupants per room.

Option 2: Two (2) single parents or guardians with not more than a total of six (6) of their dependent children provided there are no more than two occupants per room.

Option 3: A group of not more than four (4) persons not necessarily related by blood or marriage.

Option 4: An elderly and/or disabled resident, a live-in caretaker (one or both of whom own the dwelling unit) plus one (1) family

**9. ANIMALS:** Fairfax County Code §41 and Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance 2-512 regulate the kinds of animals residents may own. Residents are encouraged to stay within the parameters of these governing documents. Wild animals should not be fed.

**10. NOISE:** Fairfax County Code §108 regulates the level of noise residents can make and the hours when noise-producing activities (i.e. cutting grass, loud music, etc.) can be done. Depending on the activity, quiet times are required to be between 9 or 10pm and 6 or 7am.

**11. HOME-BASED BUSINESSES:** North Springfield is first and foremost a residential area. Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance 10-300 details acceptable home-based businesses and includes regulations such as a prohibition on customer traffic and only one commercial vehicle. Fairfax County Code §82-5.7 prohibits commercial vehicles from street parking with the exception of one (1) taxi or limousine.

**12. SNOW:** While Fairfax County does not require residents to shovel snow from their driveways and sidewalks, residents are encouraged to do so. Several children walk to school, so slipping on ice is a safety issue. Neighbors are asked to assist senior citizen and/or disabled residents who may not be able to shovel by themselves. NSCA produces a Teen Jobs List of area teenagers who can help with or charge a small fee for shoveling services. Residents are also asked to clear the area around fire hydrants.