

# Oak Meadow Estates - Resident Guidelines



## **Presented by the Oak Meadow Estates Homeowners Association Board of Directors**

The responsibility of the Board of Directors is to operate the ongoing business of the Home Owner's Association to ensure the proper condition of the common grounds and the exterior envelope/shell of each building on this property legally defined as Oak Meadow Estates. The Board is governed by the specific terms and conditions on file with the State of Connecticut and the Towns of Torrington and Harwinton. Based upon these legally binding documents, we are tasked with mediating the ongoing requests and needs of each individual unit owner when any such actions are within the jurisdiction of the official Declarations and Bylaws.

To that end, we offer this summary of some of what we consider to be the most important elements that guide our actions and decisions. These items are paramount and key to making sure we are properly operating this living business that is now our responsibility, and is no longer the responsibility of the developer as of October, 2015. We all are obligated and required to follow the provisions of our Declarations, Bylaws, Maintenance Standards, and Rules documents. This summary is offered to help each unit owner fully understand our most current interpretation of the complicated questions of 'who owns what?', and 'who is responsible for what?'

Here are the basics.

1. **Every unit owner is urged to participate** in and support the Home Owners Association. There is a lot of work that has to be done, and we collectively must either do the work ourselves, or we will have to pay enough in dues to afford to have the work done by others. Any help you can provide to the Board of Directors will serve to spread the load.
2. **Prompt payment of monthly fee is critical** - As a virtually brand new entity with very small cash reserves, the ongoing expenses to run and maintain the community are paid from each month's receipts of on-time association dues. Payments are to be placed in the HOA mail box near the community mailboxes, and due by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. If you use a bank bill pay service have your HOA checks made out to Oak Meadow Estates HOA to be received on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, and mailed to 115 Oak Meadow Lane, Harwinton, CT 06791.

3. **This is a Single Family 55 and older community**, and no one under 18 years of age may reside here. The over-55 rule has an 80% minimum requirement, meaning up to 20% of the units can be owned and occupied by residents younger than 55. No more than 2 residents per approved bedroom and no more than 5 residents per unit.
4. **Principal Single-Family Residence** – you may not have more than one family living in your home. You cannot live somewhere else and rent or lease your unit to anyone else unless you have specific approval from the Board of Directors.
5. **Your Responsibilities (What you own and are responsible for, what you can change, and what you cannot change without approval)**: Basically everything inside your home is fully your responsibility. You can not make any changes that would violate the single-family limitations in Article 10 of our Declaration. You also own all of the ‘fixtures’ for your unit that are considered ‘outside’, such as light fixtures, outlets, light bulbs, faucets, and the outdoor portion of your air conditioning unit including the refrigerant lines and electrical supply, the termination hardware for your furnace, water heater, dryer, kitchen fan, bath fans, and fireplaces. You are also responsible for the proper winter-time handling of outdoor water faucets and any related damage that may occur if you fail to do so.
6. **If you want to change, or are required to repair** or replace any fixture, door, window, or vent termination on the outside, you are required to replace them with similar appearing and functioning materials that will not substantially change the appearance of the outside of your unit. Any change must be requested in advance by submitting a ***Request for Approval to Make Change*** form and required reference materials to the Board of Directors for approval.
7. **HOA responsibilities** – The Home Owners Association has full responsibility for overseeing all ‘common areas’. The ‘shell’ of each unit, which consists of the roof to the drywall of interior ceilings, the rain gutters and downspouts, the exterior wall framing, insulation, sheathing, and siding and foundation is considered part of the common area and insured under our master policy.
  - a. Maintenance and repair of all common areas are the principal obligation and responsibility of the HOA. Windows and doors in each individual unit are included in the HOA common casualty and liability insurance, but are not included in the HOA’s maintenance and repair responsibility. The responsibility for window and door maintenance and repair exclusively and specifically falls on each individual unit owner.
  - b. The common area also includes sidewalks, gardens, shrubs, trees, and lawns, driveways, road, mail boxes, lighting, fuel tanks, retention pond and small amounts of the surrounding green belt. Those portions of the shell of your home that only serve your unit and not your neighbor’s unit (like your windows, your doors, your decks, your railings) are defined in Article 5 of our Declaration as “Limited Common Elements”, and as such, the maintenance and repair of these elements is each unit owner’s individual responsibility. If you want to change ANYTHING that is part of the common area and/or part of your specific Limited Common Elements, you are REQUIRED to submit a “Request for Approval to Make Changes” form (can be found on the documents page of the HOA website [www.omehoa.com](http://www.omehoa.com)). The form and required additional information (drawings, specifications, etc.) specified in the instructions that accompany the form, is to be delivered in person to any member of the Board of Directors. The Board will then be allowed 60 days pursuant to Article 13 of our Declaration to consider and approve a request before any work on any changes can begin.
  - c. The garden bed areas and any Board approved unit owner plantings that are in the vicinity of your unit are your responsibility for care and maintenance. You can make

- reasonable changes to these areas upon approval of the Board for typical landscape practices and plant choices.
- d. All Requests to Make Changes will be evaluated based upon the impact that the requested change would have on community property value (curb appeal), liability and insurance exposure and responsibility, maintenance and repair costs, and general harmony with the overall appearance and atmosphere of our community.
  - e. Absent proper advance approval, you can be legally required to remove and restore any unapproved work at your direct expense.
  - f. It is also the Board's responsibility to review and approve/accept the buyer or occupant when any unit is sold or leased, only as it relates to the use and occupant requirements (single family, 55+, no children under 18)
  - g. Tag Sales are not allowed in the community. Since this is a private road, the HOA would be responsible for any liability issues. In addition, parking would be a problem (i.e., driveways could be blocked and emergency vehicle access could be compromised).
8. **Board meetings** – Subject to change, the Board of Directors generally meets every other month and any unit owner is welcome to attend. All newly submitted requests that are not otherwise expedited will be considered and decided upon at these meetings. If an emergency/urgent issue arises that can't wait until the next scheduled meeting, the Board can act to expedite individual requests as long as full documentation requirements are met and reasonable time for the Board to review and decide is allowed.
  9. **Board Email Address** – You can communicate directly with all 3 board members by sending an email to [OMEHOABOD@gmail.com](mailto:OMEHOABOD@gmail.com).
  10. **Web site** – our Home Owner's Association web site address is [www.omehoa.com](http://www.omehoa.com). This password-protected web site has all of the relevant documents that govern our association that you can access any time.
  11. **Budget Surplus, Contingency, Capital Fund** – The Board feels unanimously that it is absolutely essential to ensure that we are continuously operating the association's business within the membership-approved budget while progressively building a capital contingency reserve. Our goal is to provide the best safe and responsible environment while preserving the value, appearance, and integrity of our investment and our community.

The Board pledges our best efforts to help make and keep it a nice place for us all to live. Your input, your assistance, and your support are greatly appreciated by each of us.