

The House Special



Volume 27 Issue 2

Skyline House

February 2007

Board of Directors

President, Norman Baker

January Board Meeting

The Board met on Wednesday, January 24, 2007. During the meeting, the Board approved the following motions: to accept the PPOC recommendation to direct Management to obtain bids to renovate, with pavers, the circular driveway in front of the building; to decline the PPOC recommendation to build an interior vestibule at the West mail lobby door; and, to accept the Covenants committee recommendations to designate East building resident and former Board President Charles Roberts the Inspector General for the March 2007 Board of Directors elections, to set the hours for voting on the night of the election from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., to direct Management to contract with Action Management (an independent Vote Administrator) to provide vote counting services for the election, and to mail election packages with proxy and ballot to all owners (non-resident and resident alike). The Board tabled a motion to hire a consultant to determine the feasibility and cost effectiveness of solar panels for common area energy use until the Board obtains additional information.

Board of Directors Election

By the time you read this, all owners will have received, via U. S. Mail, a letter explaining how the March 2007 election will be conducted. Please don't let it overwhelm you or confuse you. In short, it is simply notifying you that the election package to be mailed to you in March will contain your proxy and your ballot. In prior years, those items were retained by Management until you retrieved them. Other than that, casting your vote will not be much different than in the past.

There are two Board of Director positions to fill, each for a three year term. I implore you to consider running for one of these positions. Your knowledge and experience are much needed to help maintain and improve the quality of life and the value of the property in our community. Applications are available at the front desk and in the Management Office and must be submitted by 6:00 p.m., Friday, February 9, 2007.

Will You Volunteer to Chair the Recreation Committee?

I regret to inform you that Christine Dozier resigned her position as Chair of the Recreation Committee in late January. Your community is once again seeking a volunteer to serve as Chair and to reinvigorate this Committee (if there are two of you who might be interested, you could co-Chair). I am aware of one resident that might be willing to serve as co-chair. Your community needs your involvement.

Status of upcoming and future Recreation Committee activities.

I am pleased to inform you that Betty Turner of the East building has offered to insure the **Super Bowl XLI Potluck Party** on the 4th and the **TGIF** gathering on the 9th are NOT cancelled (see information on these functions elsewhere in this issue). Betty's support gets us through February. Please extend your thanks to her when you see her.

Sadly, I must inform you that you might find future functions cancelled until such time as one or more volunteers are found to Chair the Recreation Committee.

Bike Storage

Our bike storage rooms are at, or almost at, capacity. Please be honest with yourself and considerate of your neighbors. If you are storing a bike that you have not used in a long time and are not likely to use again, please consider removing it. If you give Management written permission they will even assist with disposal/donation. Please, free up a space for other residents if you really are not going to use that bike again.

Never Again Incur A Condo Fee Late Charge

Why have to remember to mail your condo fee payment every month? Why have to risk the payment arriving late and incurring a late payment fee? Almost half of Skyline House owners take advantage of the Association's simple electronic funds transfer (EFT) system to have their condo fee automatically drafted from a designated account, on a specific day, every month. It is so easy to setup. Stop by the Accounting Office and do so today.

SPECIAL APPEAL TO ALL OWNERS

The East building represents 50% of Skyline House ownership yet not one East owner is on the Board of Directors and only two East owners are members of Skyline House Committees? Of the 250 units in the West building, roughly 20 of those owners make up the Board and all the Committees. Beyond that, of the approximately 550 units in our two buildings, only a very few are ever routinely represented by owners attending any of the Associations meetings. A positive interpretation of these statistics is that, overall, owners are so content with the Association and how it is governed and managed that they do not feel compelled to get involved. Well, contentment does not excuse owners from participating. Indeed, you and your Association are much better served if governance and oversight is performed by content but interested owners. Lack of participation by content owners only serves to enable owners with a very narrow and not necessarily positive agenda to obtain a position of influence in YOUR home. Don't wait for that to happen to decide it's time to get involved. The time is NOW for content owners to step up and volunteer to serve. The Board of Directors has two seats open in the upcoming March election. Your community needs intelligent, interested, and yes, content, owners to help protect and improve the quality of our homes and the value of our investment. Content owners it is time!

You can apply to be a candidate for the Board up until 6:00 p.m. on Friday, February 9th. Pick up at an application at the front desk or in the Management Office.

If you simply can't run for the Board this year, please consider attending Board and Committee meetings this year. There will be two more Board positions open in March 2008 and maybe by then you will feel more comfortable running for one of those seats.



Management

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

East Building North & South Façade Restoration

The total completion of the façade repairs on tiers 2, 3, 8, 9 & 10 is estimated by the beginning of February, weather permitting.

The remaining tiers in the East Building, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 01 will be completed during the fourth phase of the project, which started on January 16, 2007 with the installation of the interior form boards needed above the windows. The demolition on tiers 12, 13, 14 & 15 is scheduled to start on Friday, February 2, 2007; starting with this grouping of tiers is necessary because, due to their location, the work must be completed on these tiers prior to the pool opening, scheduled for May 26, 2007.

Access Control System

The contractor will complete the installation of the hardware needed on each door included in this project during the month of February 2007.

Management started the distribution of the new key fobs to residents on January 18th. During the period of time while the Access Control Readers are being installed, residents will still use the blue security key. After all readers are installed and activated residents must use the new key fob. The blue keys will no longer work.

The number of key fobs given to residents is consistent with the number of security keys (blue keys) previously assigned to each unit. The replacement cost of each lost key fob will remain at \$25.00. Any key fob lost will be disabled in the computer and will no longer be active. This measure will allow only authorized residents, and/or their guest, to access the building.

Maintenance Log

I would like to remind all residents of the availability of the Maintenance Log kept at the Front Desk for your use in reporting items in need of correction in any of the common areas. The Log is a very good tool for residents and Management. Every morning this log is checked and a work order is scheduled for each item reported in the log by the residents. Your input is always very much appreciated since it helps us to maintain our common areas in the best condition possible at all times.

Fairfax County Tax Relief Program

The Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration (DTA) has launched a Property Tax Relief Program which includes a presentation to residents to explain in detail the mechanics of this program. We will be receiving the 2006 and 2007 Tax Relief applications in the near future. In the meantime Management needs feedback from residents who are interested in attending a Tax Relief Presentation. Fairfax County DTA has asked us to provide an estimated number of attendees before scheduling a presentation. If you are interested please contact Tania Saib, the Association's Resident Service Coordinator, at the Management Office or via e-mail to tania@shuoa.org.

Suggestions/Concerns

Management is always looking for ways to improve the service provided to residents. If at any time you have a suggestion or a concern regarding the customer service provided by any of the staff members, please contact me by phone or by e-mail and I will immediately take care of it. It is not necessary for you to wait until a board or committee meeting to raise a concern or suggestion, the earlier you report it to Management the earlier it can be resolved or implemented. The Management Office door is always open and your suggestions are always welcome.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, George Beams

The Committee met on January 11, 2007. The General Manager stated that the Association's attorney suggested the inclusion of certain Capitol Improvements in the upcoming Election ballot. Mr. Lambert suggested instead to seek to increase the dollar limit on such improvements in order to solve the problem for all future requirements. The matter was referred to the Financial Management Committee.

With regard to recycling issues, Management will ask the waste contractor if different recycling methods could be used in each building. If so, this will allow for expanded recycling in the East where there is a larger area than the similar area in the West..

A motion was approved to recommend to the Board to use driving pavers for the renovation of the front circle area.

Security and environmental issues were discussed regarding the West mail lobby entrance. A motion was approved to recommend to the Board to build an interior vestibule at this door.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chair, Wynfred Joshua

The Financial Management Committee met on January 22, 2007. Total income for the month of December was \$283,993 with expenditures of \$192,871. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$91,122. The Reserve Contribution was \$96,167, leaving a net deficit of \$5,045 before taxes. We note that we ended 2006 with \$959,652 in our reserve funds. We would have had a little over \$1 million in reserves if we had not had to pay some \$46,000 in advance for the security re-keying project scheduled for 2007. As we reported last month, we will have an overall income surplus. The exact figure will be provided after the annual audit in February.

The FMC discussed at length the issue of building improvements. According to the condo by-laws, the Board can decide on building improvements without the approval of the majority of the owners as long as the project does not cost more than \$10,000. Anything more than that would require going back to the owners for an affirmative vote of the majority of the owners – a very cumbersome and doubtful effort. The figure of \$10,000 stems from 1980 when our condo association was established. It has never been changed or adjusted for inflation. The FMC felt that this figure had become too restrictive. It moved to recommend to the Board to try to raise the ceiling by taking into account an inflationary factor, preferably going back to 1980. The FMC also requested the Board to instruct the Management to provide the methodology and proposed amount.

The FMC realized that its recommendation would amount to changing the bylaws and that amending the bylaws would require the weighted vote of some two-thirds of the owners. The Committee urged the Board to launch a campaign to familiarize the owners with the rationale for changing the by-laws.

The FMC also voted to recommend to the Board to accept the recommendation of our Consultant Engineer to pay an additional \$16,873 to Eastern Waterproofing (the contractor) for Phase II of the façade repairs. The contractor had demanded an additional \$37,374, but our Consultant Engineer's recalculation of the costs indicated that a justified additional charge was no more than \$16,873.

The next meeting of the FMC will be on Monday, February 26, 2007. As always, we welcome interested residents to join us..



COVENANTS

Chair, Joseph Livingston

On January 17, 2007, the Committee met to begin what we hope will be a fruitful 2007. Several items were addressed by the Committee. Included were our recommendations to retain the services of an independent consultant to assist in the tabulation of the voting at the 2007 election for members to the Board and to designate the time period for voting in person at the annual meeting of the Association. Additionally, we recommended the designation of an Inspector General for the 2007 election. Those recommendations were approved by the Board at its January meeting.

While on the subject of the election, by now, each Unit Owner should have received a letter from the President of the Board, calling attention to an enhanced effort to generate more participation by Unit Owners in this year's election. In this same connection, all Unit Owners are reminded that on March 13, 2007, there will be an opportunity to "Meet the Candidates." At that meeting, we will try to provide you with answers to your questions about the election procedures and the changes designed to increase the Unit Owners' participation in the governance of the Association. Please mark your calendar. We look forward to seeing you. Check the Bulletin Boards for time and place.

In closing, we take this opportunity to acknowledge our indebtedness to the many resident volunteers who give so much of their time in a variety of activities for the Association and the Skyline House residents. Our special thanks to the members of the Election Subcommittee and the Covenants Committee for their work, preparing for the 2007 election for the Board.

2007 Election Calendar

Nominations Close	Friday,	February 9, 2007
Meet The Candidates Night	Tuesday,	March 13, 2007
Annual Election	Tuesday,	March 27, 2007

Applications can be picked up at the Management Office or the front desk.

All applications need to be returned to the Management Office no later than 6:00 p.m., Friday, February 9, 2007

"HOUSE" HINT

NOISY CHAIRS

Please be aware that when chairs are pulled back and forth across uncarpeted flooring such as that in your kitchen and also in some dining rooms, the noise of that chair being dragged on the floor can be heard loudly not only in the unit below you but also in the units all around you. This can be quite annoying to your neighbors. Please remember to lift chairs when you move them and instruct your children to do the same.

Another solution is to obtain small pieces of felt or other material and glue them to the bottom of the chair legs so the chairs slide across the floor smoothly and QUIETLY.

Your neighbors will appreciate your attention to this matter.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Coordinator, Judith York

If you would like to attend the Neighborhood Watch meetings at the Mason District Police Station, please check the 2007 Schedule on the bulletin boards in the East and the West Buildings. The schedule is also in the green binder entitled "Neighborhood Watch" kept at the front desk. Information on the next two months' meetings is as follows:

Tuesday, February 7 - 6:30 p.m. Neighborhood watch Coordinators meeting and
7:30 p.m. CAC (Citizens' Advisory Committee) meeting

Tuesday, March 7 - 7:00 p.m. Neighborhood Watch Training and
7:30 p.m. CAC (Citizens' Advisory Committee) meeting

Go with a relative and/or friend to attend these meetings, which are open to the public. It is a great way to find out what the crime situation is in our area and what steps the Fairfax County Police Officers are taking to combat crime. It's also interesting to meet our local police officers and neighbors from other nearby Neighborhood Watch Programs. And thanks to Bob de Mayo (Chairman of the Security, Fire and Safety Committee) for summarizing crime information from Mason District and arranging to have it posted on the bulletin boards.

Our friend and long-time community police officer, Brendan Murphy, has left to take a new job and we all wish him good luck. Officer Carolyn Kinney is now keeping, via the internet, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinators in Fairfax County up to date with crime in our area. We are still fortunate to have Officer Chip Conner as our other community police officer so if you have any concerns, please e-mail either of them on carolyn.kinney@fairfaxcountry.gov or chris.conner@fairfaxcounty.gov. Other useful phone numbers are: the NOVA Alexandria Campus Police on 703-845-6270 (if you are concerned about untoward activity on the campus), Alexandria Police on 703-838-4444 and our front desk on 703-578-4855 (if you have problems going through the intercom). Of course for an emergency, there is also the 911 phone number (please remember to alert our front desk if you call 911 so they have information on who and which unit phoned in the emergency, as well details on the serious situation that prompted you to call). These are all phone numbers which will be answered on a 24-hour basis.

Lastly, I'd like to make another plea to those who have multiple parking spaces, either in the garage or outside, to please consider renting or selling excess spaces at a reasonable price to help our newer residents. Starting off the New Year by helping others is a wonderful way to show consideration for those unfortunate enough to have only one parking space and more than one vehicle. I was very grateful to see there have been recent ads of parking spaces for rental or sale - and I thank those who were willing to help alleviate this difficult parking problem. We all know how expensive our area is and it means couples must both work to afford the cost of accommodation. There are also single parent families with grown-up children who need more than one parking space. Thanks to anyone kind enough to help our Skyline House residents by offering to rent, or sell, their extra parking spaces.

MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL

This is just a reminder to bring your magazines to the front desk so Tony DiSalvo can deliver them to Alexandria Hospital. Please do not hold the magazines for long periods of time before doing so as they become outdated. The magazines are much appreciated by the Hospital volunteers. Any questions call Tony at 703-824-1958.

POTLUCK SUPERBOWL XLI PARTY

5:30 p.m., Sunday, February 4, 2007

(game time 6:30 p.m.)

West Party Room

**Come cheer on the Chicago Bears or the Indianapolis Colts
with Skyline House friends and neighbors.**

**BRING ALONG TO SHARE WITH ALL
SNACKS, A POTLUCK DISH, AND A DESSERT.**

Oh, and don't forget your own liquid refreshments.

**There will be a 50/50 raffle drawing during halftime.
One team and one resident will end the evening a winner!**

ALL ARE WELCOME

TGIF* Gathering

6:30 p.m., Friday, February 9, 2007

West Party Room

If you have not attended one of the monthly TGIF gatherings before, make February 9th your first. To make it easy, you are requested NOT to bring a plate of hors d'ourves, just your own liquid refreshments.

ALL ARE WELCOME

***Thank Goodness It's Friday**

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors will assist residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency.

FEBRUARY GOOD NEIGHBORS*

HELEN & LAW HENDERSON 703-578-0189

GWEN PETITJEAN 703-820-4260

(*GOOD NEIGHBOR CONTACT INFO CAN ALSO BE FOUND ON THE CALENDAR PAGE)

Good Neighbors always welcomes new members to assist those in need. If you are interested in serving your neighbors, please call Coordinator Toska Prather or Ernest Loyola. Their contact information is listed in the newsletter directory on the calendar page.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2007

(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Potluck Super Bowl Party 5:30 p.m. W. Party Room	5 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	6	7	8 Physical Plant & Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	9 TGIF Gathering 6:30 p.m. W. Party Room	10
11	12 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Library Closed	20 Recreation Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	21	22	23	24
25	26 Financial Mgt. Comm. 7:00 pm W. Card Room Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	27	28 Board of Directors Mtg 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room			
GOOD NEIGHBORS: HELEN & LAW HENDERSON (703-578-0189) & GWEN PETITJEAN (703-820-4260)						

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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THE HOUSE SPECIAL welcomes brief comments from its readers. Limit your letters to 250 words or less and include your name and unit number. The Association Board reserves the right to refuse incorrect or inappropriate statements. Information for THE HOUSE SPECIAL may be sent by e-mail to the Editor, dropped off at the Management office or the front desk attention EDITOR.

ACTING EDITOR --- Norman Baker 915W nbaker@fjc.gov 671-6759

THE HOUSE SPECIAL is published by: Skyline House Unit Owners' Association, Inc.,
3711 South George Mason Drive,
Falls Church, VA 22041-3711.

The House Special is printed by Dan Daniels Pioneer Press

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Falls Church VA 22041-3711**