The House Special



Volume 30 Issues 10

Skyline House

October 2010



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The Board of Directors met on Wednesday, September 22, 2010.

During its meeting, the Board:

approved a Management, Physical Plant and Operations Committee and Financial Management Committee recommendation to award a contract to Black Box Network Services to replace our very old and barely maintainable front desk telephone/intercom system,

and, approved twelve management identified, and PPOC recommended, motorcycle parking spaces in the garage to be designated as assigned motorcycle parking spaces. Previously the Board had agreed that a monthly rental charge of \$45 would apply to each space.

Under New Business, the Board received from the Financial Management Committee a draft 2011 Budget which the Board will review over the next few weeks and then consider as an Action Item during its October meeting. I thank the Chair and members of the Committee, its subcommittees and also our General Manager and her staff for the immense amount of time and effort they put into thoughtfully developing, discussing, and fine-tuning the proposed 2011 budget during the so-called quiet month of August.

During the meeting I made special mention of the members of our Garden Club and the beautiful work they have been doing on both the West and East grounds as well as at the front entrance circle area. I also recognized their stamina because on many of the days they accomplished their plantings, the temperature hovered around 100 degrees. Thank you Garden Club!

Finally, just prior to adjournment, the Board briefly recessed to convene in Executive Session to continue to consider, from its July meeting, follow-up information regarding a matter involving a tenant violation of the rules and regulations. The Board subsequently reconvened in open session an acted upon that matter.

The Board of Directors will next convene on Wednesday, October 27, 2010.

Skyline Wowe

MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

Asphalt Resurfacing

The asphalt resurfacing of all parking lots was completed during the week of August 9th. The contractor installed a second speed hump, as recommended by the Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee and approved by the Board. All cars from these outside lots were removed in a timely manner while this project was taking place. A total of 57 residents and guests took advantage of **temporary** offsite day time parking at a cost to the Association of \$1,083 The **temporary** overnight parking was free of charge.

Unit Windows and Balcony Door Replacement Project

Unit 1005W was selected on September 1st to serve as the model unit for this project. The Association's Consultant Engineer reviewed and approved the drawings submitted by Hi Rise Windows. The windows for the model unit are being manufactured and installation is estimated for late October. Soon after (the end of October, beginning of November), the contractor will hold open houses in 1005W for all owners to view the new installed windows and balcony door. Notices will be posted in advance. (Watch for the notices on House bulletin boards.)

Painting of Balcony Doors

The painting of all balcony doors in the West Building began mid-September and completion is estimated for the first week of October. Several residents have inquired about the painting of the balcony window panels. These panels will not be painted as they will be replaced next year in the West Building.

The East Building Balcony door painting and panel replacement will be accomplished in 2012 as soon as the balcony repair and railing replacement project in that building is completed.

Cleaning of A/C-Heating-Dryer Ducts and Dryer Vents

Per request of several residents, Management has obtained a bulk price for the cleaning of all A/C-Heating-Dryer ducts in the units. Notices will be posted in advance, letting residents know the specific start and end days for this project which will be scheduled for early November. Any resident interested in signing up for this service needs to ensure that their dryer vent located above the balcony door is clean. If you have not had this vent cleaned during the last 12 months, you may request this service, free of charge, by contacting the Management Office to schedule a work order. (Watch for the notices on House bulletin boards.)

For units in tiers (not floors) 05, 06 and 14 in each building, the dryer vent is located outside on the façade. Management has hired a contractor to clean these vents on October 1, 2010.

Recoating of East Garage Pedestrian Bridge

The top coat of the waterproofing membrane installed on the floor of the East Garage Pedestrian Bridge in the mid-1980's is worn out and in need of recoating. This project is estimated to be completed during the third week of October. Notices will be posted in advance on House bulletin boards. The estimated time needed for the completion of the project is four days, during this time the bridge will be closed to foot traffic and East residents will be required to use the West Garage Elevators to access their cars and the building.

<u>Use of Outdoor Common Areas – Car Washing/Servicing Prohibited</u>

Management has encountered a couple of incidents of residents hiring a detailer to perform cleaning of their vehicles while parked in guest parking or the loading dock areas. Rule 18 E. 4 of our Rules and Regulations stipulates that "Car washing in the garage or elsewhere on the premises is prohibited." Car detailing on the property is in violation of this rule and will be dealt with accordingly. As a reminder, Rule 18 E. 5 states "Vehicles shall not be repaired, or any lubricants or fuels changed in the parking garage, outside parking spaces, or elsewhere on the premises, except for emergencies, such as changing tires or starting the vehicle with jumper cables." Again, any reported violation of this rule and will be dealt with accordingly.

DON'T OVER-SUDS YOUR LAUNDRY OR YOUR NEIGHBORS

Washing machine soap suds can back up through various drains in lower units. This can occur as a result of residents using either too much laundry detergent or the wrong type of detergent and is the reason for Rule 21 B of the Rules and Regulations which states, "Unit Owners/Residents shall use only low-sudsing soaps and detergents which will not cause overflow of water and suds into other condominium units."

Typically, front loading machines much less detergent than top loading machines. If you see suds on or close to the window of your front-loading washing machine, you are using too much detergent. You should see virtually <u>no</u> suds when you do laundry.

Please check your current product and make sure it is clearly labeled low-sudsing. If it is not, please consider changing brands and/or reducing the amount of detergent you use when you run a load of wash.



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

Rust Stains on Newly Coated West Building Balconies

Several residents have asked how to remove rust stains caused by furniture, tables, etc. from the newly coated balconies. These spots are very easy to remove. Simply, with the floor dry, pour a small amount of club soda onto the rust stain. Wait a few seconds, then lightly brush off the rust and blot up the remaining club soda. In almost every case the club soda will completely remove the rust. This also works on rust stains on unfinished concrete.



SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De Mayo

As I mentioned during the Board meeting, autumn began Thursday, September 23rd and I wish you all a bountiful fall season! The Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee (SS&NWC) met September 8, 2010. All of our members were present except Ms. Miller who was ill; we wish her a speedy and full recovery.

In my opening comments, I expressed great concern that activity levels of our Neighborhood Watch (NW) members have been markedly down over the past 4-5 months. Even our National Night Out celebration, unfortunately, only had about a dozen attendees. I've asked my fellow committee members and Neighborhood Watchers to help me help them get more active and engaged in keeping our Skyline House secure and safe. I think a NW-only meeting next month might be in order; more to come on that via e-mail.

Since it had been a couple of months since our last meeting, I recapped the highlights of the previous meeting. Focus was on the Board-approved – somewhat controversial - procedure to place the garage entrance door in an open position during limited evening rush hours. This procedure sought to preserve rotational wear and tear on the door mechanism and resultant high costs to the SHUOA. Unfortunately, certain residents – disregarding the safety of their neighbors – were observed driving out the one-way garage entrance thereby putting entering residents in jeopardy. This procedure was suspended pending further discussion. Insofar as the SS&NWC is concerned, our intentions were good (i.e., cost-savings) and the risk-management was balanced;

it was just unfortunate that certain residents disregarded their neighbor's safety. The SS&NWC will revisit this cost-saving option next year when the longer daylight hours work in our favor.

I recapped my attendance at the monthly Citizen's Advisory Council (CAC) meeting at the Mason Government Center on Columbia Pike. The main speaker at the event was Ms. Lucy Caldwell, a long-time civilian member of the Fairfax County Police Public Information Office (PIO). Lucy scoped out the vast responsibilities of the PIO and her small office of four police officers and one civilian in keeping the Fairfax community aware of safety and security common issues, police concerns and crime happenings. She emphasized how blogs and the internet are being used to immediately "get the word out". The SS&NWC noted it would be refreshing to get our Cox Channel 95 up and running to keep information such as area-wide Police News Releases flowing to our residents in a timely manner. I've asked Management to provide us an update on this channel installation at our next meeting.

Lucy also spoke about the Virginia and Fairfax County "Distracted Driver" campaign that is underway. Drivers found eating, texting, speaking on cell phones – even with "hands free" headphones – while driving, will be subject to ticketing when observed by the police. She also emphasized that Cox Cable Channel 16 has a quarterly feature show entitled "On the Beat" which showcases, in-depth, issues of high interest to county residents.

CAC attendees also voted – I on behalf of the SHUOA – for the Mason District Police-Officer-Of-The-Month from two nominations presented by Lieutenant Lee, Deputy District Commander. Three winners from previous months received their awards and a hearty round of applause from the CAC membership. By the way, CAC members are volunteers like me from many other condominium and homeowner associations in the Mason Police District who represent their associations with one purpose – to support law enforcement and thereby ensure the security and safety of our neighborhoods. The next CAC meeting on October 5th at 7:15PM will be held in conjunction with a CAC tour of the new Fairfax County Alert Center. I'll be attending and can transport a few others in my car for the tour. If interested in participating, let me know ASAP since names have to be furnished several days in advance to the Alert Center Security Office.

Driving the "wrong direction" and speeding in the garage continue to be bad practices of some residents. When observed, violators will be reported to Management. Continued violations will result in a Covenants Hearing, and likely a fine. Management reaffirmed to me that they keep track of all such reports and all such offenses.

Let's file this next incident under "Knucklehead of the Month": As I drove inside the garage entrance, I noticed a car just beyond the top of the up ramp which was quickly backed out of its parking space and then continued to be driven backwards, zipping up the ramp between floors to the next level. The driver then conducted a squealing tire wheelie about-face, sped up the out ramp and zipped out of the garage. I was so stunned by this insane maneuver that I was unable to get the license plate number. If you see this knucklehead doing this again, please get the license plate or parking spot number and report it for reckless driving before someone is injured – by a driver speeding backwards in the garage!

Management's and my personal observations both attest to Security Officer Darnell Smith doing a superior and outstanding job. *Thanks Officer Smith*!

After our meeting, the SS&NWC took a tour of the Front Lobby desk area, conducted by the Management rep, to view the operations of the new cameras and new wide-screen DVR's. Wow! What a fantastic difference: Clear, sharp views of our grounds in both HD in daylight and later on in crystal clear night-vision! The zoom features on some cameras was being adjusted by Greg, our Chief Engineer, to provide close-ups of the garage entrance/exits. There is no doubt that our security monitoring capability is now enhanced and facial/license plate recognition is now inplace. Desk staff and Security Officers will be trained to use these new, modern observational capabilities. In sum, this upgrade was a solid investment in modern technology.

On our next agenda item, it was absolutely shocking to the entire SS&NWC how many residents are entering our premises without an issued Key Fob. From a security viewpoint, Management tracks individuals attempting building access who do not have key fobs and a current list is maintained. In all cases, House procedures require that anyone without a key fob must sign-in at the front desk and be sponsored for access. However, the number of times residents — mostly renter — have approached the front desk for sign-in or permission was staggering! Over 60 residents in August alone; most are repeats, some residents 25, 29, 31 and 48 times in one

month! A few were all in one family; a few were children; but the preponderance were adults and renters. Committee members inquired as to the cause: Management speculated that it was up to the "owner" to furnish their renters key fobs. Discussion amongst committee members brought up the concerns of possibly overworking and distracting the front desk staff from primary duties, mandating the need for renters to be issued a key by the owner, or the possibility of permitting renters to purchase key fobs. Committee members raised the potential issue of owners unaware of exactly how many occupants are: (1) living in their unit (i.e., over-occupancy under county code), and/or (2) do not have a key fob. We will continue to examine this on-going issue at our SS&NWC meetings from a security perspective.

As a postscript and a security concern, a committee member reported sighting individuals dropping key fobs from balconies to other persons seeking entry. This is an egregious violation of our condominium House Rules and will be dealt with firmly as a very serious violation when observed/reported. House Rules mandate that all visitors must sign-in at the Front Desk; any compromise of that House Rule leaves violators open to charges of trespassing. Violation of this House Rule undercuts the security and safety of all residents. It must be stopped.

Some attendees brought up a "peace and tranquility" concern over loud motorcycle Engine/Resonator noise in the garage and on our grounds which has become disturbing, even late at night. Management was asked to ensure strict enforcement and inform motorcycle owners in Skyline House to refrain from revving their engine in the garage, on the grounds and in the immediate neighborhood, at any time.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Al Lambert

Greetings! With the August recess behind us, the Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) met on September 9, 2010 to work on a number of Association initiatives. The first order of business was to review the second replacement of the internal telephone system since construction of the condominium. What is the internal telephone system? It is a system serving 559 intercom units and 113 common area extensions which include the Management Office. The system includes eight 12-button telephone sets for the Management Office and two 32-button telephones for the Front Desk. The current system installed in 1992 began to have failure of critical parts. Since the system is no longer manufactured, repair parts are no longer available, and Contractors are no longer providing maintenance support, so it became necessary to replace the entire system. The three bids from firms for replacing the system were Black Box (\$84,301.30), Telforward (\$83,679.02) and Double Eagle (\$124,236.37). The latter two bids did not include a battery pack for backup and hence were an incomplete proposal. After an extensive discussion, the Committee recommended Black Box for approval based on their proposal which included the battery pack. Their proposal included one year of maintenance service and support together with five years of software upgrades. The firm has been handling maintenance support for our existing telephone system and during this time frame has provided excellent service. The projected life cycle for the new telephone system will be twelve years.

The Landscaping Subcommittee, which includes Garden Club members, proposed a plan to revitalize the outside circle in front of the Main Lobby. Due to a variety of circumstances the bushes and shrubbery have failed to take hold and blossom. The volunteers will conduct replanting of the boxwoods away from the outer edge of the circle to avoid the shrubbery damage incurred last year during snow removal operations. New flowers will be added. Anyone wishing to participate or join the Landscaping Committee (Garden Club) please contact Howard Haymes @ 703-347-7918 or email hankee1@gmail.com.

The PPOC also approved the designation of twelve motorcycle parking spaces with a projected rental implementation date of October 1, 2010. Hereafter, all motorcycles will be registered, have an assigned parking space, and pay a monthly rental fee.

During the PPOC's September walk-around, the participants were able to view the renovated employee break areas which included new appliances, a tile floor and furniture. It was a well deserved upgrade for our employees who continue to not only maintain and clean our facility on

a 7-day-a-week basis but provide superb in-house maintenance service. Our appreciation goes to all the in-house staff who have provided this service for many years.

Speaking of the walk-around, the next one will occur on Thursday October 7th at 7:00 p.m. beginning in the Lobby. It will include the Exercise Room (postponed from September) and the East Party Room. In the past, there have been suggestions to upgrade or find a new larger location for expansion of the Exercise Room. There are numerous advantages to improving our Exercise Room but only through participation and having your voice heard can we move forward on this potential project.

Lastly, for those who might enjoy viewing a Sunrise, the fall weather and a late rising sun (after 7:00 a.m.) can provide a few quiet moments. Visit and relax for a few minutes at our Promenade which has a garden behind the swimming pool. Suggestions to improve this amenity are always welcome.

The next meeting of the PPOC will be on Thursday, October 14, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Card Room. As always, I welcome your feedback on this article or any matter pertaining to the PPOC. This is your home! We welcome you to join us. Thank You!



FINANCIAL MANAGMENT

Chair, Wynfred Joshua

The Financial Management Committee met on September 20, 2010. Total income for the month of August was \$332,195 with expenditures of \$212,621. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$119,573. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$107,446, leaving a net income before taxes of \$12,127. Our current financial outlook has improved somewhat. As of the end of August we have a year-to-date positive net income of \$8,400.

As expected, our utility costs have increased; these bills will continue to rise until October when they will probably decrease again. We note that year-to-date attorney fees remain high; more than \$11,000 for legal fees for Association matters, and roughly another \$11,000 incurred due to costs associated with collecting delinquent assessments. We are pleased to report that most of the latter fees, some \$9,400, have been recovered from the unit owners.

The FMC unanimously supported the PPOC recommendation to award the contract for replacing our telephone and intercom system in the amount of \$84,301.30 plus tax to Black Box Network Services. As the PPOC report explains, our current system has been discontinued and can no longer be supported. The new system, however, costs significantly less than the \$333,929 which we had projected for replacing our old system in a future year. While we had not budgeted for a new system this year, funds are available in our reserve account for replacement items. We have adjusted the 2011 Reserve Budget and Reserve Fund Plan to reflect the new acquisition price and lifetime.

The FMC submitted to the Board the draft 2011 budget. Committee members, including those of the PPOC, the Treasurer, and the General Manager worked long and hard on the budget to ensure as limited of a condo fee increase as possible. Our Committee would like to make two points:

1. We discussed at great length the 3.00% increase in personnel costs. We note that each year we have steadfastly increased salaries, benefits, and associated costs at approximately 3%. Note that contributions for 401K and life insurance, which we provide for our personnel, rise accordingly. We have done this despite the fact that owners living on a fixed income did not receive a cost of living increase last year, nor will they receive one for this coming year. We were informed that the Board wished to review a budget with the usual increase for personnel. This is, of course, the Board's prerogative. Hence we did not request the General Manager to make any changes in this sector of the draft budget. It is the responsibility of the Board to decide what the final salaries and associated costs will be for 2011.

We do plan, however, to undertake a study to identify a cap as established in industry for each type of worker or staffer. This could help the Board to determine personnel costs next year for the 2012 budget cycle.

2. We have increased the Legal Fees account for general Association matters 150% or up to \$10,000. We believe that the Board needs to consult regularly with our attorney regarding increasingly complicated condo matters. We urge the Board, however, to be mindful of potential increases in legal fees as a result of litigation involving owners deemed to be in violation of condominium rules, especially newly adopted regulations that can affect long-standing arrangements. We trust the Board will seek to mitigate legal fees and expenses as much as possible.

As a final comment, as we proceed with enabling owners to replace windows and balcony doors, we should ensure that these are Energy Star certified and that owners can do this before January 1, 2011, so that they can claim a tax credit.

The next meeting of the FMC will be on Monday, October 25, 2010. We welcome all residents to join us and give us your ideas.



COVENANTS

Chair, Joseph Livingston

The Covenants Committee met on September 21, 2010. There were two agenda items discussed.

After being briefed by management on the status of the plan for garage rental spaces for motorcycles, we reviewed Article 18 E 12 of the Association's Rules and Regulations which governs parking and vehicular responsibilities and concluded no modification of the rule was warranted at this time.

The second item was a briefing by the chair of a revision of the manual for the election of the board of directors. Copies of the revision were distributed to acquaint committee members with the Election Committee's work, since we have oversight responsibilities. No action was required.

In sum, this revision incorporated the single election notification package for all owners—both resident and nonresident—to include ballots and proxies; establishment of the annual election date as the 4th Tuesday rather than the last Tuesday in March; provision for professional counting services; inclusion of procedures to tackle indebtedness and preclude this problem from disqualifying voters; and updated forms and letters used in conducting the election. It was agreed that if the committee members had additional questions, arrangements would be made for a more detailed briefing by the Chair of the Election Committee at a later date.

In addition to the matters discussed above, several committee members made some suggestions to the management representative regarding continuing violation of rules and regulations pertaining to the garage.

Finally, having been informed of an injury sustained by our committee member, Mrs. Nadyne McKelvey, while visiting with her family in California, the committee sent her a card wishing her a speedy recovery and a safe return.

The next meeting of the Covenants Committee is scheduled for November 17, 2010 at 7:00p.m. As always, all unit owners/residents are invited to attend the Committee's meeting.

OCTOBER GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors assist residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency. Services provided are typically short term and in the local area. For example, picking up mail or prescriptions or making small grocery purchases.

Anyone experiencing a medical emergency should call 911 immediately.

GWEN PETIJEAN 703-820-4260 TOSKA PRATHER 703-379-7849

Good Neighbors welcomes new members to assist those in need. If you are interested in serving your neighbors, call Coordinator Toska Prather or Virginia Fissmer. Their contact information is listed in the newsletter directory.

Friends of George Mason Regional Library USED BOOK SALE

One huge sale in five areas of the library. Rare and unusual books, children's books, fiction and non-fiction books, audio books, recorded music, videos and much, much more.

Thursday, October 21, 5 pm to 9 pm Friday October 22, 10 am to 6 pm Saturday October 23, 10 am to 5 pm Sunday, October 14, noon to 5 pm

George Mason Regional Library 7001 Little River Turnpike Annandale, Virginia 22003

ATTENTION ALL RESIDENTS PROPER USE OF YOUR BALCONY

IS YOUR BALCONY A CLUTTERED, UNSIGHTLY STORAGE AREA? RULE 15 G. STATES, "BALCONIES SHALL NOT BE USED FOR STORAGE."

PLEASE BE SURE YOUR BALCONY IS NOT AN EYESORE. CLEAN IT UP. REMOVE EMPTY POTS, DEAD PLANTS, TRASH CONTAINERS, AND OTHER ITEMS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR A BALCONY. DO NOT USE YOUR BALCONY TO STORE ITEMS. THAT IS NOT ITS PURPOSE.

RULE 15 H. Prohibits bicycles stored on balconies. The Association provides an easy-in, easy-out facility for bicycle storage on the ground floor of each building. If you have a bicycle and need a place to store it, consult with the Management Office staff.

RULE 15 B. Prohibits the hanging of any items on clothes lines, racks or any other similar devices on your balcony.

BALCONY ETIQUETTE

When watering your plants remember, water running out of your pots rains down on all the balconies below. Not only does it stain and damage balconies and furniture, on occasion, it might even drench a neighbor. Please use saucers under all your plants.

Feeding birds on your balcony might seem a nice thing to do but is prohibited by House rules as it creates major problems for your neighbors and the Association. Do not feed birds and if you have a bird feeder please remove it.

MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, NO MATTER IT'S SIZE, NEVER THROW ANYTHING FROM YOUR BALCONY (especially cigarettes)

MAGAZINES FOR ALEXANDRIA HOSPITAL

Don't forget 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's patients, visitors, and volunteers. Any questions call Tony at 703-824-1958.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR **OCTOBER 2010**



(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	5	6	7 Physical Plant & Ops. Comm. WALK AROUND 7:00 p.m.	8	9
10	Library CLOSED	12	13	Physical Plant and Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	15	16
17	Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Financial Management Committee	26	27 BOARD	28	29	30
31	7:00 p.m. W. Card Room Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse		MEETING 7:00 PM W. Card Room			

GOOD NEIGHBORS: TOSKA PRATHER 703-379-7849 and GWEN PETIJEAN 703-820-4260

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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