



Until we find a  
volunteer to edit  
the newsletter this  
is what will be  
available in the  
future.



Board of Directors  
President, Maria Elena Schacknies  
May 27, 2015

The poet John Donne wrote that “no man is an island; every man is a piece of the continent.” But the condominium owner who fails to see beyond the floor, ceiling, door, and walls of his or her unit might as well be living on an isolated island surrounded by a vast ocean. It doesn’t take x-ray vision to know that almost all of us have neighbors above and below us, and on both sides. Once we fully acknowledge our neighbors—who are real people just like us—we cease to be an island and realize that we are members of a Condominium Community, an entity that exists on two levels: legal and personal.

At the legal level, our community is a government. Owners elect a Board of Directors consisting of other owners who collectively make the decisions which determine the quality of our living environment and greatly influence the value of our property. Six committees, also consisting of owners, research issues within their areas of expertise and make formal recommendations to the Board. Our most basic responsibilities to this legal Community include voting in condo elections, paying condo fees in a timely manner, and abiding by the Skyline House Rules and Regulations. The steps toward greater involvement in the Legal Community may begin with attending the occasional committee or Board meeting. People who find their niche may then graduate to serving on a committee, or running for the Board of Directors. The committee structure is so varied that a place of honor awaits anyone with legal expertise, experience with construction or building maintenance, an interest in gardening, knowledge of accounting or finance, skills in community relations, or the ability to operate a large charcoal grill or throw a good party . . . or a desire to acquire any of these skills. So what are you waiting for? Get involved. Meet some new people. Help to make Skyline House—and maybe the world—a better place.

The Legal and the Personal communities intersect because the condo government depends on the voluntary involvement of owners. An owner who chooses to remain on a desert island has a renter mentality, thinking that “my responsibility begins and ends with the monthly check I write to Skyline House. I have no responsibilities here beyond that. The owner of this building makes all of the decisions, and does all of the work. I just live here. I have no say in anything.” Nothing could be further from the truth. The legal structure of the condominium would collapse, or more accurately, cease to exist, if all owners had the renter mentality. There would be no Board of Directors, no committees, no owners who vote. It is no exaggeration to suggest that under these conditions we would disappear as a legal entity, and our investment would evaporate. So out of necessity, and because there is great satisfaction in stepping forward in the service of something larger than oneself, some owners make the personal decision to volunteer. They have left behind the island and the renter mentality because they recognize that they *are* the owners, that *they* must make the decisions. These volunteers see not only challenges but also great opportunities to build a positive future for Skyline House. They aren’t landlords looking for profit. Rather, like you, they are owners and, as such, their best interests are yours as well.

The island dwellers among us seem content to have everything done for them. Behaving like a renter in a condominium is like plugging one's appliances into a neighbor's electrical outlets. The condo fee doesn't pay for the Board of Directors, the committees, the Garden Club, or the Good Neighbor volunteers. They generously donate their time, energies, and expertise without pay. The islander-owner, in contrast, gets something important for nothing.

Owners who want to move off their islands may not feel ready to participate in the Legal Community right away. But they have many opportunities to enjoy and enrich the Personal Community, the one that consists of direct interactions with other residents. Here are just a few of the many simple and easy ways to help build the Personal Community, and to enjoy membership in it:

- Get to know at least your next-door neighbors by name and greet them in the hallways, elevators, and garage.
- Be a good neighbor who picks up groceries or prescriptions for a sick person down the hall (or volunteer for the Skyline House Good Neighbor Program).
- Hold elevator and other doors for neighbors. Help an elderly neighbor carry a heavy package.
- People from a wide variety of countries and cultures live at Skyline House. Be adventurous. Introduce yourself to a neighbor with a different cultural background. Share and learn.
- Step forward to help new neighbors learn about Skyline House. Let them know at the outset that they're not marooned on a desert island.
- Attend Skyline House social events arranged by our excellent Recreation Committee. These range from TGIFs in the West Party Room to barbeques and get-togethers on Super Bowl Sunday.

These common courtesies and small shared experiences are the building blocks of the Personal Community. They accumulate over time to create trust, comfort, friendship, and a sense of belonging. As we come to know and appreciate each other, we are more inclined to share our ideas about how we can work together to make Skyline House an even better place to live. Whether we know it or not, we would all feel safer and more at home in a community of neighbors who are acquaintances or friends than we would living in isolation on a metaphorical island in a huge sea where the other islands and people are tiny specks on the horizon. Helping to build the Skyline House Personal Community can be as deeply satisfying as living in it.

Here's what the poet Donne was really saying: "We're all in this together!"

The Board approved a two-month extension of JWF's project management contract through July 2015, and additional cost of \$4500 (\$2,250/month).

The Board didn't approve to pay for the editing of the newsletter due to lack of funds. Consequently, the newsletter will no longer be produced. The new approach is to photocopy the reports and stapled them together for distribution.

The Board approved pay WDP \$8900 to proceed with the bridge concrete testing.

## **Treasurer's Commentary**

**Karen H. Johnson, Treasurer**

Financial data through the end of April are now available. There were no major developments or surprises contained in the financial data for April. As a result, this will be a brief report.

Notable this month are the following items: Receipt of the insurance funds related to the fire is recorded in the April data. The \$4,828.12 we received is for expenses in excess of the deductible for our policy. Our landscaping firm was able to get caught up in April on spring work and on billing us. The \$14,317.44 payment in April to the landscaper was large for one month, but brought that item back on budget for the year to date. As expected, the lack of rental income on the unit owned by the Association continued to contribute to a shortfall in income. However, for the month of April, that shortfall was more than offset by other above-budget income items. For April, spending on utilities was close to budget for both electricity and water, although electricity remains above budget for the year to date. Taken altogether, the net of income and spending in April came out slightly more positive than expected. The net figure for the year to date would be close to budget expectations except for the \$7,500 of the fire expenses that we pay as our deductible; that portion was not provided for in the budget.

As of April 30, the number of units in past due status dropped to 18 from 23. The amount owed to the Association by those owners is \$34,700. The number of units that are renter occupied remained at 26 percent.

## MANAGEMENT REPORT

Board Meeting – May 27, 2015

### **Webb GenTech – (Emergency Generators & Fuel Tanks Replacement Project)**

Both generators and fuel tanks were removed on Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, via crane. The ATS (automatic transfer switches) for the passenger elevators were ordered and delivered. But are waiting additional parts that should arrive within two weeks. Weather permitting, the concrete pads are scheduled to be demolished and new pads will be poured with reinforced concrete the week of May 22nd. The concrete must cure for 25-30 days. All 6 passenger elevators were scheduled to be shut down on May 20<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00pm to 5:00am for the ATS to be installed. That date may be rescheduled based on the arrival of parts. Both freight elevators will be in service during the shutdown period in case of emergency. The garage elevators will also be in service. A change order will be submitted by Webb for work to wire the freight elevators to operate during the shutdown. This work was not in the original contract but Management required it for emergency safety reasons. Both new generators are scheduled to be installed June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting, and barring equipment delivery delays. No move-in, move-outs, or deliveries will be scheduled to use the loading docks during that time.

JFW requested a 2 month extension to their project management contract and fees since the project was originally scheduled to be completed in April, versus July 2015. The project duration was delayed due to the contract award and negotiations that took one month longer than projected; and the procurement and construction activities are taking a month longer. The additional monthly fee is \$2,250 (\$4,500 total), which is lower than the Phase III (\$2,700) and Phase IV (\$2,400), monthly rates in the original contract.

### **Bridge Project**

Our attorney advised us that WDP 's actions were reasonable based on the documentation and contract. If the Association wants to bring action against WDP we would need to present *"a written certification executed by an independent engineer licensed in the State in which the WDP office submitting [their proposal was] located, specifying each and every act or omission which the certifier contends constitutes a violation of the standard of care expected of an engineer performing professional services under similar circumstances."*

PPOC and FMC recommend that the Board approve for WDP to continue with the concrete testing (\$8,900), and obtain and confirm all necessary bridge specs information. Then proceed with the Request For Proposal (RFP) process for Kalwall's bridge system, and a separate or sub-contract for the bridge demolition. Award the bids, and plan to complete the bridge installation in 2016.

### **Water Shut Off Valve Project**

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, SSI will conduct a test run of the West buildings tier #01, to work out logistics and timing. Once completed they will schedule the rest of the 173 volunteers who signed up last year (2014), to have their water shut off valves replaced. Attached is an information sheet that was distributed on May 15<sup>th</sup>, to each of the 173 residents that signed up. It includes an overview of the project on one side, and a cost sheet on the other side. Additional info will be sent after the first tier has been completed, and/or as needed.



**Action Needed by Board on 5/27/15:**

1. **Generator project** - recommendation to approve a two month extension of JFW's project management contract thru July, 2015, and additional cost of \$4,500 (\$2,250/month).
2. **Bridge project** - recommendation to proceed with bridge concrete testing (\$8,900), RFP and contract awards process; and plan to replace bridge in 2016.
3. **Newsletter Editor** – recommendation to pay the editor between \$500-\$700 for the June through December 2015, newsletters.

**NOTE: \*\*The next scheduled Board meeting is Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**REMINDER: RESIDENT SERVICE COORDINATOR ASSIGNMENTS**

In order to serve you better, please remember that Noemi and Debbie have each been assigned a building.

If you live in the **WEST** – please see or call **NOEMI**.

If you live in the **EAST** - please see or call **DEBBIE**.

## Newsletter Article (May 2015)

Greetings:

On May 14, the PPOC convened its monthly meeting in the West Card Room at 7:00 p.m. The following events occurred:

Generator Project: Recommended to approve a two month extension of JFW's project management contract thru July, 2015, at an additional cost of \$4,500 (\$2,250/month).

Bridge Project: Recommended to proceed with bridge concrete testing, RFP and contract award process; and plan to replace bridge in 2016.

Garage Doors: Undertook a discussion to open garage doors during rush hours (exit door in the morning; and entrance door in the evening), Monday thru Friday. Tabled further discussion until the June meeting.

Informed committee members and visitors a Sub-Committee had been established for the purpose of conducting a survey of our owners on whether to repurpose common area amenities.

Recommended an in-house painting project be scheduled to paint two façade panels behind the west building which were now a color white because of the bleaching effect of the sun and whether.



Decided to conduct a walk-around of an area behind the east building where trash is being dumped to possibly erect a fence or post signage.

The next PPOC meeting will be on Thursday, June 11 at 7:00 p.m. 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 Management Report

May 2015

Wynfred Joshua

The FMC met on Monday, May 18, 2015. Let me start with presenting the financial update for the month of April: Total Income was \$373,675; Total Expenditures for expenses were \$215,202; Reserve Contributions were \$122,989; Net Income before Taxes was: \$35,483; Estimated Taxes were \$4,500; our resulting Net Income after Taxes was \$30,983.

The financial statements for April indicated that the legal fees for collecting condo fees were \$1230 over budget. This was partly because our attorney was working on a new foreclosure. Paint supplies for the year-to-date were more than \$6,600 over budget, largely because of requirements for the hall corridors. Most other accounts were either close to what had been budgeted or the invoices accumulated charges for the last several months.

In reviewing the Reserve Schedule, the committee was concerned that we had made only limited progress implementing repair or replacement items scheduled for this year. Hence, we asked the General Manager to review each item scheduled for periodic maintenance or replacement in 2015 or earlier and to report to the committee what the current plans were for such items; this was briefly done at the meeting. The following paragraph includes some of the highlights of the oral report:

Currently, the redecoration committee has not decided upon nor scheduled any of the items on the Reserve Schedule that were intended to be implemented or started this year. These include lobby furniture, columns restoration, wall covering for the lobby and galleries, and other items. These may or may not be postponed. Replacement of the emergency generators is proceeding. As to the East Bridge project, future scheduling of items associated with the project depend on the outcome of the concrete testing. Other items, such as exterior light poles and fixtures are being replaced when needed and scheduled on a one by one basis. Some items are simply being postponed because of the logistic problems, costs, or lack of time.

The FMC committee noted that the use of the ATM machine was slowly increasing. Access One, the company operating the ATM machine, reported that there had been 127 transactions for the month of March versus 115 for February. Several FMC members suggested that we seek to negotiate with Access One to retain the ATM in case we do not reach the monthly minimum requirement of 150 transactions and the company wants to recall the ATM. The FMC clearly views the ATM more as a benefit for the residents than a revenue enhancing effort.

After lengthy discussions, the FMC made the following three recommendations to the Board:

1. To approve a two-month extension of our management contract for the emergency generators with Jim F. Wilson, Inc. for an additional cost of \$4,500. The project was originally scheduled to be completed in April but was delayed due to the fact that negotiations and contract award took

one month longer than projected and procurement and construction activities required more time.

2. To allow Whitlock Dalrymple Poston & Associates to proceed with the concrete testing for \$8,900 to obtain the necessary bridge specs for the East Bridge project.
3. To continue paying an editor for the House Special until the end of the year for no more than \$700 per month for covering all editorial and formatting tasks.

The next FMC meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 22, 2015. All members of the Skyline House Community are welcome to join us and give us the benefit of their advice.

## SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Chair, Diane M. Zierhoffer

The Security, Safety and Neighborhood Watch Committee meeting was not held in May 2015. A safety presentation by the Fairfax County Fire Department was held on 19 May.

Safety tips from the presentation will be published in upcoming newsletters.

Of most significance to our residents was the point that smoke detectors are only good for 10 years. I would guess that many residents have never thought to change theirs, thinking if the test button works, all must be well. Greg has prepared an article for the June newsletter about smoke detectors. I urge every resident to read it, and replace any and all smoke detectors you have that are 10 years old, or older.

Many of us have sprinkler covers that have been painted over. Greg assures me that the sprinklers, should they be triggered by heat, WILL blow through the paint that has covered the silver plates. However, if yours are not painted, don't ever paint over them.

The fire in February 2015 was reported to have been caused by a cigarette butt dropped in a flower pot. Oddly enough, this is, unfortunately, a common and preventable cause of fires. In the winter, flower pots likely have dry, dead leaves and twigs which will combust. Instead, smokers should use a deep container as an ash tray which is not lined with combustible material. Extinguish all smoking material before dropping it in your ash tray. And NEVER throw your discarded smoking material off your balcony.

The May Management Office Report reminds residents to sign up in the Management Office if you need help during an emergency. You will be helped out of your unit by emergency personnel if there is an actual threat. The information is kept in a binder at the front desk and is given to emergency personnel upon their arrival.

Remember, the alarms only sound on the floor of, one floor above, and one floor below the emergency. This is typical in high rises. The fire department will make the determination if alarms need to be sounded on other floors. Smoke alarms will only sound if pulled, if a sprinkler is actively spraying water, or if they are manually activated in the Fire Control Room by the front desk. Alarms will not turn on unless the smoke is dense enough and hot enough. The mere smell of smoke will not trigger the alarms.

Again, please read the newsletter for more tips on fire safety.

The SS&NWC will next meet on 8 July 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Zierhoffer

# GARDEN CLUB REPORT: May 2015

What is happening?

Our summer landscape of flowers and shrubs is almost completed. Roses are blooming in front of the west building, wave petunias are in the vase within the circle at the main entrance surrounded by begonias with green grass.

The vases at the front lobby door and west building entrance door have a combination of flowers such as begonias, impatiens, coleus, and sweet potato vine. Three new trees (one red and two autumn blaze maples) have been planted adjacent to older and larger trees that are in distress.

The club wishes to recognize Ms. Hanna Jones for volunteering to plant many of the impatient flowers in landscaped areas entering and exiting the garage.

There are a few remaining trees surrounded with our resilient pansies which unfortunately have to be replaced due to their inability to withstand hot weather temperatures.

Please remember the flowers belong to everyone (adults, teenagers, and children). When unsupervised children pick flowers, or cigarette butts are dropped from the balconies the flowers, bushes, and shrubs are damaged. This is akin to damaging your own property because it is your home. Please help us in allowing everyone to enjoy the flowers. Thank you!



## Fire Safety in Units

Smoke detectors that are hard wired and do not use batteries were installed in every unit during the building's construction. Several residents have replaced these over the years. A few have added an extra battery powered smoke detector in addition to the hard wired one, and some have replaced the original smoke detector with hard wired units with battery backup. Many residents have not replaced the original smoke detector. They push that test button on those over thirty-five year old smoke detectors and if it alarms, they think it is still good. A smoke detector that's over ten years old may or may not work, but will likely fail in the event of a fire due to age. The original smoke detectors were Honeywell brand and larger than most new units with a round test disk/button in the center. **If you have a Honeywell smoke detector in your unit, it needs to be replaced as soon as possible.** *(We currently stock and use hard wired smoke detectors with battery backup if you request that we change your smoke detector. Changing that battery annually is your responsibility)*

The questions below were submitted after the fire safety meeting the week of May 17<sup>th</sup>.

1. **How many different types of smoke detectors do we have on site? What are the differences?** Every condominium in the building has one hard wired smoke detector. Some units have changed this to the combination type that uses electricity and have a battery backup. (For the common areas, all smoke detectors are hard wired and in the event of a power outage, power is supplied to them with the generator, so battery backup is unnecessary.)
2. What's the average life of our smoke detectors? The life of *any* smoke detector is ten years.
3. Do we have a battery back-up in addition to the hard wire? No, less than 1% have requested battery backup, but if we are requested to replace a smoke detector, it will have battery backup if we provide and install the new detector.
4. Do we need a backup? It is a great idea, but is not required by code. Just remember, if the electricity fails there is no coverage. So, using a combination type is the recommended way to go.
5. Do we need smoke detectors in every bedroom? This is not required by code. It is recommended, but not required.
6. Do we need the fire dept. to check our smoke detectors? No. You should test each smoke detector in your unit weekly.
7. Are we sure there is a detector in every unit? Yes, when the building was constructed, they were required by code. (If you cannot locate the smoke detector in your unit, call the management office immediately, so we can check; all of the hard wired detectors are located on the ceiling in the hallway of the units.)
8. Who is responsible for the units smoke detectors? The unit's owner/resident.

9. How will residents know if their smoke detector works (will it buzz when it no longer works?) You should test it/them monthly. They do not buzz or ring on failure, but smoke detectors with battery backup will “chirp” when the battery needs to be replaced, and NO, replacing that battery in your smoke detector is not an emergency. Replacing the battery is **your** responsibility (We will not come to your unit after hours to replace a battery).

10. How does one test the smoke detector? Every residential smoke detector has a test button located somewhere on the unit. How often must they be tested? Weekly! *You* must assume this responsibility and test weekly and replace the battery (if it has one) yearly. Using the “test” button is the recommended way to test a smoke alarm. Press and hold the test button on the unit until the alarm sounds (the unit may continue to alarm for a few seconds after you release the button). If the unit does not alarm when you test, replace the unit immediately.

11. How and when are the sprinklers in the units tested? There is no way to test a fire sprinkler. Once a sprinkler has “opened” and sprays water, the sprinkler head must be replaced to be back in operation.

12. Are we sure they work properly? As long as the power or generator is on, yes.

13. Is my smoke detector in my unit connected to the fire alarm system for the building? No. Each resident’s smoke detector alarms locally in the unit only, and is not connected to any other devices or monitored in any way. If your smoke detector activates and you have smoke or fire, immediately call 911, and pull the fire alarm in the corridor as you leave the building.

For more information you can check out FEMA’s website at this address:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/>



# SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

## June 2015



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1 Recreation</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Meeting Room <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	2	3	4	5	6
7	<b>8 Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	9	10	<b>11 PPOC</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	12	13
14	<b>15 Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	16	<b>17 Covenants</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	<b>18 CRC</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	19	20
21	<b>22 FIN MGT</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room <b>Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	23	<b>24 BOARD</b> 7:00 PM Meeting Room	25	26	27
28	<b>29 Library Open</b> 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	30				

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