

The House Special



Volume XXVI Issue 10

Skyline House

October 2006

Board of Directors

President, Norman Baker

During its September 27th meeting, the Board approved several action items. Two are of particular importance to all owners: a change in collection procedures related to the monthly condo fee and a change in the payment policies for in-unit services. Read about these (and all approved items) in this issue's reports.

New Electronic Access (Key) System Information Meeting

At 7 PM Monday, October 9th, the Security, Fire and Safety Committee (SFSC) will discuss the coming transition to an electronic access system for common area doors. The plan is to replace the big, blue key we all carry with a "swipe card" or small key-ring fob that will electronically unlock common area doors. This new system will make our buildings more secure because an electronic key can be deactivated -- a lost key will then not work if found by someone else. I encourage everyone to attend this meeting to learn and ask questions about the new system. (See SFSC report in this issue).

Recreation Committee Meeting

At 7 PM Wednesday, October 11th the Recreation Committee's new Chair, Christine Dozier, will conduct her first meeting. Christine is excited about all the possibilities open to the Committee and is interested in hearing from one and all. No idea is too old or too new. She is also seeking new members to join up to help her bring more recreational and social activities to our House. I encourage one and all to attend, bring and share your ideas. Now is the time to get involved and help reinvigorate the Recreation Committee!

Proposed 2007 Budget

Thank you to the members of the FMC and the PPOC who, along with our Treasurer and our General Manager, worked diligently during the past several weeks to produce a 2007 budget for Board consideration. There were several late nights involving much discussion and analysis of both the operations budget and the reserves budget before producing a final product. If approved by the Board, the recommended budget will result in a

relatively modest increase in the 2007 monthly condo fee while the most exciting aspect is a projected reserve balance of over \$2 million in 2009. Job well done. Thank you all.

Adua Stranere

On a personal note. Many of you knew our wonderful, long time, front desk receptionist Adua Stranere, who, earlier this year, retired and moved back to Italy. A resident asked that I share a message from Adua: "I really miss all my friends at Skyline House but still it is good to be back home after so many years away. Please write me c/o Elsa Taraschi, 64049 Tossicia, Teramo, Italy."



Management

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

In-Unit Maintenance Application and Agreement

When the In-Unit Maintenance Program was first implemented, all owners were required to sign a Membership Application & Agreement prior to receiving services. At the recommendation of the Associations' attorney, the Board approved a new version of the Agreement during its September 27th meeting. The new version entitles the Association to accrue a \$25 late fee to any participant whose payment is 15 days past due. It also gives the Association the right to refer a participant in a delinquent status for over 30 days, to the Association's attorney, at the participant's expense. Effective October 1st the new Agreement must be signed by an owner prior to requesting an In-Unit work order.

Unit owners may come to the Management Office at any time to sign a new Agreement. You do not have to wait until you have a need for work to be done in your unit. The new Agreement was mailed September 29th to non-resident unit owners and e-mailed to unit owners who have registered their e-mail address. Those receiving the form via these methods should sign it and hand-carry, mail or fax it back to the Management Office.

East Building North and South Façade Restoration

The façade repairs on tiers 4, 5, 6 & 7 were completed last month with the exception of the spandrel repairs directly above the loading dock area, which will be completed during the first week of October. Notices have been posted informing residents that the loading dock rolling door will be blocked between 8 AM and 5 PM while this work is completed.

The work on the tiers 2, 3, 8, 9 & 10, started during the first week of August 2006. The completion of the façade repairs on these tiers is estimated between the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007, weather permitting. The concrete demolition phase in these tiers is expected to be completed by the end of October or beginning of November 2006.

Unfortunately, the repair process imposes a real inconvenience on the residents of units on the side that is being worked on. The drilling, which is very noisy, occurs in two separate phases: first, to remove the bad concrete and, second to remove the brick above the spandrel in order to replace the existing flashing. The party rooms are available 9 AM to 5 PM to escape the noise while the repairs are being done outside your unit. Please keep in mind that the façade repairs also generate a high volume of dust and debris. Please keep your doors and windows closed while the work is being performed and do not access your balcony during that time.

The remaining tiers in the East Building, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 01 will be completed during the fourth phase of the project, scheduled to start in March 2007.

Garage Painting

The painting of all cinder block walls and vertical columns of the A, B & C garage levels, and the repainting of directional signs located on the columns and walls, that began September 11th was completed September 29th. In the coming winter months, Management, with the PPOC, will assess the need for additional painting in these levels.

Privately Owned Garage and Outside Parking Spaces

We need to remind residents of the need to provide the Management Office with a copy of the parking space rental agreement each time that a privately owned space is rented to another Skyline House resident. Lately we have encountered several situations where a car parked outside or in the garage was either parked in the wrong parking space or had the lights on. In any of these situations the Front Desk personnel can only rely on the information contained in the database in order to inform the owner of the car in question. If you have only a verbal agreement, we encourage you to complete a written rental agreement, copies of which, can be obtained free of charge in the Management Office.

If you plan to buy/sell a parking space, please be sure to follow the steps necessary to legally complete the transaction. The buying/selling of a limited common area space requires an Amendment to Declaration and Bylaws for the reassignment of the parking space. This transaction must be completed and recorded prior to the sale of the unit.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, George Beams

The Physical Plant and Operations Committee met on September 14th. The main item of business was consideration of two proposals: one for electrical maintenance and the other for driveway asphalt resealing. After some discussion, motions were passed to recommend two contractors to the Board to perform these services [information on the specific contractors and amounts can be found in the FMC report below].

Resident Jean Orben gave a brief presentation on the possibility of Skyline House making use of solar panels to offset building-wide central electricity costs which represent about 7% of the monthly condo fee we all pay. A packet with this information will be distributed at the October 12th PPOC meeting.

Management is trying to contact companies to negotiate discounted group pricing for residents who would like to replace some of the old glass panels in their unit windows.

Management was also asked, when requesting proposals for the renovation of the circular drive in front of the lobby, to investigate extending the sidewalk to the end of the West building so guests and residents will not have to walk in the driveway itself.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chair, Wynfred Joshua

The Financial Management Committee (FMC) met on September 18th. Total income for August was \$289,641 with expenditures of \$201,972. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$87,669. The total Reserve Contributions were \$96,167 leaving a negative net income before taxes of \$8,498. The deficit for August reflects a number of payments for bills that should have been submitted in July or earlier, such as the fee for the garage doors maintenance, and charges for licenses and permits. There were no issues that raised any concern.

Electrical Service and Asphalt Resurfacing Contracts

The FMC endorses PPOC's recommendation to the Board to award a contract in the amount of \$11,830 for the Electrical Service Maintenance to Walsh Electric. The latter created the best impression of the bidders. The current budget allocated \$16,000 for this service; so we are well under budget. The guarantee is the customary one-year.

The FMC supports the PPOC's selection of awarding the contract for asphalt resealing of the West and East Driveways to NVM Contractors for the amount of \$ 9,610. Here again, the contract is below the \$12,297 we have in the budget for this project. Our experience with NVM has been very good. The guarantee is also one year.

New In-Unit Maintenance Payment Policy

The FMC reviewed the revised Membership Application for the In-Unit Maintenance Program. This new Agreement will have to be signed by residents requesting in-unit maintenance the next time they do so. It stipulates that invoices for the work done be paid within 15 days after which a late charge of \$25 will be levied. Any charges not paid within 30 days will be sent to our attorney for collection. All fees incurred will be charged to the delinquent owner. Owners requesting in-unit work generally expect immediate response. By the same token, payment should be equally prompt. The FMC recommends that the Board approve the revised agreement.

New Collection Procedures for Late Condo Fee Payments

The FMC discussed proposed changes to the collection procedures of delinquent monthly condo fees and endorsed the revisions. Owners who are more than 10 days late will be notified and incur a \$10 late fee. Once the delinquency is more than 30 days, a second letter will alert the owner to pay within 7 days or the account will be automatically referred to the attorney for collection. The purpose is to speed up the process and place the delinquency in the hands of our attorney sooner. Had the new procedure been in place during the first half of the year, we would have been able to refer 7 units to our attorney who, in turn, would have been able to file a lien 20 days earlier. It is essential to the financial health of our Association and the interests of all unit owners that assessments are paid when due.

Proposed 2007 Budget

The FMC devoted most of its session to a review of the proposed 2007 budget, which we have submitted to the Board. General Manager Silva did excellent work on the budget. The FMC worked closely with the PPOC; members of both committees did a superb job of reviewing each of the budget items.

A joint PPOC/FMC subcommittee reviewed the reserves budget. We recommend increasing the annual contribution to the reserves from 1.5% to 2.25%. For 2007 this increase amounts to little over \$9,700. This will allow us to proceed with the façade repairs and all major planned projects on schedule. Only one project will have to be postponed for 2 years and that is the overhaul of the hydraulic garage elevators. We have been assured that we can do this without damage to the elevators. Once we make the commitment to a 2.25% increase, however, we will have to do the same every year. But with this relatively small increase in the reserve contribution, we can finance planned projects and we will meet our objective of having \$2 million plus in the reserves by the end of 2009. After 2009 our reserves will steadily grow.

An FMC subcommittee reviewed the operations budget. Insurance represented a relatively major increase of 37.61%. This was the result of an increase in the appraisal of our condominium buildings and equipment from \$129 million to \$203.8 million. Our condominium documents stipulate that insurance should be for full replacement costs. Next month I will go into more detail on the budget. Putting both parts of the budget together, the result should be only a modest increase in the monthly condo fee.

The next meeting of the FMC is scheduled for Monday, October 16th. As always, we welcome members of our community to get involved in its financial management.



COVENANANTS

Chair, Joseph Livingston

After a restful summer, the Covenants Committee is back at work. The Committee met September 20th facing the same problem, poor attendance. You are invited to visit with us, and if you are interested in the work of the Committee, you are welcome to join.

At the September meeting, the Committee addressed two matters related to the governance of the Association. We agreed to review a long-standing resolution pertaining to the procedures for the conduct of hearings and the assessment of sanctions for alleged violations of the Rules and Regulations of the Skyline House Unit Owner's Association. Following the review of the resolution, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

The second matter related to the status of the Election Subcommittee's proposal that the 2007 election for members of the Board of Directors be an all mail-in ballot. We have concluded that in-person voting during the Annual Meeting is requirement and thus the Subcommittee's recommendation must be modified. The Covenants Committee will meet with its Subcommittee to review the status of the Subcommittee's work and to assist in every possible way. The Board will be given an update at the its November meeting.

The work of the Covenants Committee and its Election Subcommittee are indispensable to the governance of our Association. It is through the dedication of the many Skyline House volunteers, with strong staff support and the leadership of a responsive Board that we enjoy a safe, clean and pleasant community. With your help, we can do better. Please join us at the Covenants Committee meetings. We meet every other month and the next meeting is November 15th.



SECURITY, FIRE, & SAFETY

Chair, Robert De Mayo

The Security, Fire & Safety Committee (SFSC) met on September 13th. The first item of discussion was the upcoming 5-year re-keying process for Skyline House which will take the form of electronic "swipe cards" instead of replacement keys which are more costly and, unlike the new system, cannot be deactivated when lost or when a resident moves.

The SFSC Chairman has scheduled a non-routine meeting for 7 PM Monday, October 9th in the West Card Room to review the proposed contract prior to PPOC and FMC review. The meeting will also serve as a forum for any interested residents to hear details of what "swipe card access" will entail and will begin to "get the word out" to Skyline residents on why the switch from keys to cards is taking place.

A member expressed concern that the painted cross-hatch in the area leading from the West building driveway to George Mason Drive marked a pedestrian "right of way" on the sidewalk, had faded/worn out, and needed to be repainted. The committee was informed it would be repainted as part of the upcoming driveway-resurfacing project.

The foregoing subject led to discussion of another issue, the lack of a permanent pedestrian walkway leading from our exterior guest parking, wrapping around the side of the west building to the concrete sidewalk and lobby area. Concern was expressed about pedestrian safety enroute to the lobby while walking in the driveway, especially at night. Suggestions included: (1) constructing a permanent sidewalk (2) painting a pedestrian walkway on the roadway adjacent to the curb (e.g., like a crosswalk) about 2-3 feet in width. [As noted in the PPOC report in this issue, a sidewalk will be considered as part of next year's circle renovation project]

Some discussion ensued on the new rules prohibiting parked/standing vehicles in our traffic circle outside the main lobby. Those rules were mandated by the Fire Department to ensure access by emergency vehicles. Front desk staff will apply the “rule of reason” to vehicles waiting to pickup residents but drivers are not permitted to leave their vehicles and/or leave the vehicle parked in the circle for an “unreasonable” period of time.

Residents and committee members expressed concern over continuing violations of the 5 MPH speed limit in the parking garage and also vehicles parked in the garage without proper resident “stickers” displayed. Deputy General Manager Hall said he would continue to emphasize enforcement of these rules to our Security patrols.

USE YOUR HEADLIGHTS

Always turn your headlights on while driving in the garage. This will not only help you more easily see other cars and pedestrians, it will also help others see your car. Such a small effort immensely improves your odds of avoiding an accident in the garage.

SLOW DOWN

The speed limit in the garage is FIVE (5) miles per hour. Please obey it.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Coordinator, Judith York

Officers at the Mason District Police Station recently surveyed neighborhood watch groups in Fairfax County about the primary times neighborhood watch volunteers were walking (patrolling) to try to determine if crimes occurred more often during the hours when the volunteers were not walking (patrolling). I informed the officers that our neighborhood watch volunteers walked (patrolled) primarily between the hours of 6 PM and 10 PM (as several of our volunteers work full-time) but that we do have some morning and afternoon walkers (patrollers) as well. Skyline House watch volunteers are encouraged to vary, if possible, the days and hours they walk so there is not an easily predictable pattern to their service. Beyond our watch group, we are fortunate to have 24-hour front desk coverage and security officers on evenings, weekends and holidays. That is far more concentrated coverage, for two hi-rise buildings, than most residential areas in the county and this provides us with a much more secure environment.

Mr. Ernest Loyola kindly attended the September 5th meetings at Mason District and provided a general rundown of the three meetings. The topics included (a) the above survey, where police officers concluded that, unlike Skyline House, more volunteers walked during the day than in the evening and that less crime occurred during daylight hours; (b) the Police Academy – an officer gave a talk, accompanied by a slide show, on the training of new recruits and held a question and answer session afterwards; and (c) the use of the Taser (gun) during the apprehension of suspects who do not obey police orders. These meetings are always open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

Most of the incidents reported on the neighborhood watch monitoring forms involved unit doors left ajar (violation of rule 3.G.) and vehicles parked on Skyline House property without a Skyline House registration decal (violation of rule 18.E.6). Several volunteers also noted the cleanliness and tidiness of building areas. I thank the Housekeeping crew for its continued hard work to make our community an attractive home. Some may not think of our condominiums as being on the same level as homes but they are indeed home to many, many people. Our neighbors sometimes become our extended family when relatives live elsewhere and small gestures of kindness and friendliness go a long way toward making residents happier and less isolated when friends and family are not in the area. Anyone interested in joining the Neighborhood Watch Group, can phone me on 703-671-2267. Thank you all for your volunteerism.



RECREATION

Chair, Christine Dozier

The September TGIF was held on September 8th in the East Party Room. Event attendance was encouraging with more than 30 residents participating. Tony DiSalvo was shown appreciation by the Association and residents and awarded a lovely desk clock engraved with words of thanks and gratitude for a job well done over his many years as Recreation Committee Chairman. He will be missed in this position but we look forward to his involvement on the Committee as we move forward.

The next Committee meeting will be Wednesday, October 11th in the West Card Room at 7 PM. Many residents have expressed an interest in assistance as well as ideas for new activities or reviving activities of old. The agenda will be posted a week prior to the meeting and an open forum will be encouraged for an interactive session. We look forward to getting to know you, hearing your thoughts and ideas, and working together.



October TGIF* Gathering



*Thank Goodness It's Friday

6:30 PM, Friday, October 13th

West Party Room

If you have not attended one of the monthly TGIF gatherings before, make October 13th your first. To make it easy, you are requested NOT to bring a plate of hors d'ourves, just your own liquid refreshments. **And, yes, Dave's now famous Chili will make an appearance, be sure to get there before it is gone!**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE



ANNUAL CHILDREN'S HALLOWEEN PARTY

4:00 to 6:00 PM, Tuesday, October 31st

West Party Room

All Skyline House children are invited to the annual Halloween Party
(costume optional)

There will be drinks, treats, games, and surprises.

ALL CHILDREN ARE WELCOME

Parental Supervision Is Requested

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Good Neighbors are available to assist all residents in need of temporary help due to illness or emergency.

OCTOBER GOOD NEIGHBORS*

CHARLES ROBERTS 703-998-6080

DAVID SHANDLOFF 703-820-3673

(*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.



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm

Warning: Medicine Cabinet Mirrors Falling Off And Shattering

Mirrors on originally installed medicine cabinets continue to detach from cabinet doors. Over such a long period of time, the glue holding the mirror onto the cabinet door completely disintegrates. The mirror simply drops off the cabinet and shatters.

The in-unit maintenance staff can replace the mirror on your cabinet for around \$30.00. Also, Home Depot sells an entire medicine cabinet that fits the existing opening of the current medicine cabinet in your unit. The Home Depot cabinet is white painted wood with a mirror that cannot fall out as it is framed into the door of the cabinet. The cost of this cabinet is around \$40.00. If you choose to purchase the Home Depot cabinet, the in-unit maintenance staff will install it for a modest cost.

Schedule an appointment in the Management Office for this or any other in-unit service.

Test Your Heater

Cold winter weather is right around the corner. Don't be surprised on the first bitter cold morning to learn your heater is not working properly. Test your heating unit sometime soon and make sure it is dispensing warm air. If not, the in-unit maintenance staff can be scheduled to service your system, or replace it if necessary, at a very reasonable cost.

“HOUSE” HINTS

BACKPACKS

Parents, please ask your children to be careful when wearing backpacks to not lean against the wood veneer panels inside the elevators. We believe zippers and other items hanging off the packs could be causing unintended scratching of the wood.

MISDIRECTED POSTAL MAIL

If you receive another residents mail in your mailbox please do not leave it on the table in the mail lobby area. Do your neighbor a favor and take it to the front desk. This will not only guarantee that your neighbor receives the mail but will also assist in correcting the address problem so you do not continue to receive misdirected mail.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

OCTOBER 2006

(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Security New Key Sys. 7:00 pm <u>W. Card Room</u> Library Closed	10	11 Recreation 7:00 pm W. Card Room	12 Physical Plant & Operations 7:00 pm W. Card Room	13 TGIF 6:30 pm W. Party Room	14
15	16 Financial Mgmt 7:00 pm WCR Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 pm East Penthouse	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 pm East Penthouse	24	25 Board of Directors 7:00 pm W. Card Room	26	27	28
29 Set Clocks Back One Hour	30 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 pm East Penthouse	31 Children's Halloween Party 4:00 - 6:00 pm W. Party Room				
GOOD NEIGHBORS: CHARLES ROBERTS (703-998-6080) and DAVID SHANDLOFF (703-820-3673)						

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.

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