

The House Special



Volume 29 Issue 7

Skyline House

July 2009



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker

The Board of Directors met June 24, 2009. It was a busy, long evening. In addition to the usual committee reports and one action item (discussed below) the Board also met, after the business meeting, to deal with a Covenants matter and to provide guidance on other administrative matters.

Phase 1 of the four year Balcony Concrete Repair and Railing Replacement project has begun. Many of you are aware of the inconveniences this will cause for everyone but especially, this year, the residents of the south side of the West building. These inconveniences include:

During the overall 10 week (weather permitting) project, removal of everything (including satellite dishes) from involved balconies; no access to involved balconies; boarded balcony windows during work hours on involved balconies; and, destruction of 25-30 square feet of perimeter tile on those involved balconies where there is tile.

Displacement from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday of the 30 vehicles parked on the south side of the west building directly under the involved balconies. Many of these vehicles will be moved simply by virtue of the resident going to work, but some will need to occupy a guest parking space during those hours which will, to some extent, impact daytime guest parking.

During the actual concrete demolition phase (estimated at up to 4 weeks), no pool or mezzanine sundeck access Monday – Friday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The pool will be open 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. those days and normal hours on weekends. Lounge chairs will be available on the East Penthouse sundeck for those residents wanting to sunbathe during these closings. In addition, to offset foregone pool hours, the pool season will be extended past the usual Labor Day closing.

And let us not forget the loud noise of demolition which will impact all west building residents (the West Penthouse Party Room will be made available for those needing a little respite from the noise of balcony concrete demolition.)

Project Positives:

Having noted all the inconveniences, we must remember and remind all others whom we might hear complaining during this project that:

The project is a long time coming; is extremely important to the maintenance, structural integrity and value of our homes; it will result in beautiful balconies with new railings presenting a clean well kept appearance from a distance and up close; and, it will serve to continue to make Skyline House the most desirable Skyline area buildings in which to own and live.

Finally, the project also, and most importantly, reflects the incredibly good and hard work of our Management team, our Physical Plant and Finance Committees and our Board members. The fact that we will accomplish what we will, and that we will, unbelievably, pay for this multi-million dollar effort without (hopefully) resorting to a large or, for that matter, any, special assessment is truly a tribute to the few individuals who are actively involved in our community (hired or volunteer) and how hard they work to do what is best for all of us and our homes.

As I said above, please remember all of this and, if you hear someone grumbling about the inconveniences associated with this project and remind them of the positives noted above.

Action Item

The Board approved three Election Committee recommendations as approved and recommended by the Covenants Committee at its May 20, 2009 meeting as follows:

(1) Contract again in 2010 with Ms. Debbie Ribis, Budget Analyst and Independent Vote Administrator, to provide counting services for the Skyline House 2010 election. (2) Revise the election materials to add and highlight language to emphasize that ballots received without notarized proxies or from owners having any debt to the Association of more than 30 days cannot be counted. (3) Direct Management to attempt to contact, prior to the election, owners in arrears to advise them of the voting implications of their financial status and afford them the opportunity to resolve the issue in an orderly manner so they will be able to vote in the election.

Recreation Committee Chair Vacancy

On June 15th, I informed the Board that I received an email from Betty Turner informing me that, for personal reasons and, effective immediately, she was resigning as Chair and, as a member, of the Recreation Committee. In my response to Betty I offered thanks to her for all her efforts to try to reinvigorate the Recreation Committee and its social functions here at Skyline House. I do so again now – “thank you Betty.”

Elsewhere in this issue, is an announcement seeking a volunteer to assume the duties of Chair of the Recreation Committee. Until such time as an individual steps forward, is appointed, and has time to regroup Committee members, there will be no Recreation Committee meetings or functions. Fortunately, no functions are scheduled for July. We will see what happens from there.



MANAGEMENT

General Manager, Gusbey Silva

Balcony Concrete Repairs and Railing Replacement Project

The balcony repairs and railing replacement project started on Thursday June 25, 2009, with the mobilization of the equipment needed for this project and the installation of the swing stations over each balcony on the south side of the West Building. All balcony windows and doors have been secured from the outside to ensure that residents will not access the balconies during construction.

The concrete demolition phase will start on Monday, July 6th and it will be completed in approximately four weeks, weather permitting. After all the concrete repairs have been completed the contractor will proceed with the recoating of the balcony ceiling and walls.

The West Party Room will be available during the demolition weeks in order to avoid the noise generated from the drilling during this phase.

The West Penthouse sundeck will be off limits during construction due to the equipment and wiring installed on the deck. Also, the Mezzanine sundeck will be off limits from Monday through Friday during the demolition phase. You may use the East Penthouse sundeck where additional chairs are available for your convenience.

The contractor estimates it will take ten weeks, weather permitting, to complete the balcony repairs and railing replacement in each balcony. During this time the balcony windows will be boarded up during working hours only. There won't be any access to the balcony from the unit.

Pool Hours during Balcony Repairs

Effective Monday, July 6th, the pool will be closed during working hours Monday through Friday while the balcony concrete demolition is taking place. The contractor estimates that the duration of this phase of the project will be four weeks, weather permitting. During this time the Mezzanine Sun Deck will be also closed in order to avoid any injury due to falling debris from the balconies adjacent to the pool area however, keep in mind, you may use the East Penthouse Sun Deck where additional chairs will be available for your convenience.

The pool will open from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm Monday through Thursday. On Fridays the pool and Mezzanine Sun Deck will reopen at 4:00 pm for the weekend. The Mezzanine Sun Deck will be closed on Sundays at 11:00 pm. The contracted pool hours not provided during the balcony concrete demolition, will be provided by the pool management company during the month of September 2009 to provide extended pool use past the usual Labor Day closing.

Cox Cable Technical Issues

If you experience a technical issue with Cable TV provided by Cox, needs to contact Cox directly to report the problem. Cox does not provide a technician on a weekly basis to take care of all issues that may have come up. Instead, you can obtain help as soon as possible without having to wait until a set day of the week day. Contact Cox Customer Service at 703-480-6390.

Building Access

Please remember that all guests, contractors, vendors, cleaning personal, etc, MUST enter the building through the Main Lobby. Do not allow entry to any unauthorized person through any other building door.



COVENANTS

Chair, Joseph Livingston

The Covenants Committee did not meet in June. The next scheduled meeting of the Covenants Committee is Wednesday, July 15, 2009, West Card Room at 7:00p.m.

All Skyline House residents are invited to attend.

Is Your Unit Adequately Insured?

While Skyline House's *common areas* are insured against damage, your individual unit is not covered under this master policy. You should purchase an HO-6 policy to protect against damage which occurs *inside your unit* and/or to your *personal property*.

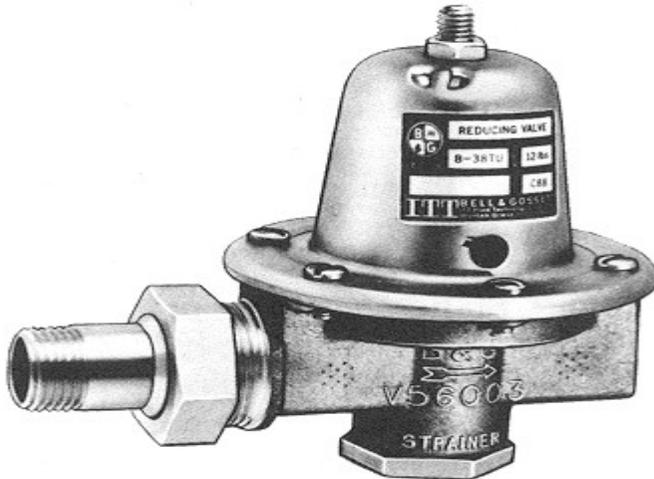
Renters should consider purchasing *renters insurance* for damage to personal property.

In addition, consider purchasing "*loss assessment*" insurance. It would provide coverage for a special assessment, should the Skyline House Unit Owners' Association ever find need to impose one for an emergency or special need to the building as a whole. This very inexpensive insurance can be purchased at different coverage levels. Many homeowner insurers offer up to \$50,000 coverage for less than \$20 per annual premium.



INFO FROM THE ENGINEER

Attention All Units On Floors Ground (T) Through The 6th Floor Continuing Problems With Pressure Reducing Valves



All units at Skyline House located on floors Ground through the 6th floor have pressure reducing valves located above the hot water heater in their utility room. This valve is a bronze colored, bell shaped device located on your water line, just past the main unit cut off valve, which is above the water heater.

We are starting to see these valves leaking, rusting, and in some cases even growing mold from all the moisture on the outside of the valve. A couple have leaked onto the top of the water heater, causing damage and rust that will eventually lead to failure of the water heater.

If you live on the 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st, or Ground ("T") floors please check the pressure reducing valve in your unit. If you observe any moisture, mold, rust, or evidence that it has been dripping onto the top of the water heater, it is time to replace it.

In-unit maintenance does NOT do this type of work. You will need to call your plumber for replacement. Although we are unable to perform the actual work, Skyline House staff can perform the inspection for you if you are uncertain about the need to call a plumber. Please keep in mind there will be a \$10.00 minimum charge if you schedule an appointment for inspection.

If you live in unit on the 7th floor or above this notice DOES NOT apply to you.

Air Conditioning Leaks

We are still experiencing air conditioning leaks and failures due to lack of maintenance to the heat pumps* in many units. If you haven't had a preventative maintenance inspection on your HVAC* unit, please call the office and schedule one. You could save money and possible prevent damage from leaks.

* The HVAC, or heat pump, is the unit in your utility closet, next to your water heater, that produces your heat and your air conditioning.

JULY 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.

NILDA VIQUEIRA 703-379-4239

LOUISE ALBIN 703-379-1645

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.

RECREATION CHAIR -- PLEASE VOLUNTEER

Our Skyline House Recreation Committee is without a Chairperson.

(See related announcement in the President's Report in this issue of the House Special.)

The Recreation Committee plans and implements activities to enhance fellowship and socializing among those who live in Skyline House.

If you are interested in volunteering to work to keep the Recreation Committee a viable part of our community by serving as its Chairperson, please step forward.

If you can help,

Please contact Norman Baker at nbaker@fjc.gov or 703-671-6759



AD HOC DECORATION COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs, Maria Elena Schacknies & Alina Gonzalez

Management is reviewing the updated proposal received from the contractor to ensure that all questions are answered to the Association's satisfaction. The revised proposal will be submitted to the PPOC, the FMC and the Board of Directors for approval at their respective July 2009 meetings. After approval of the contract, display boards together with large samples of the carpet will be on display in the Front Lobby so residents can indicate which one they prefer.



PHYSICAL PLANT & OPERATIONS

Chair, Al Lambert

Greetings! The June 11, 2009 Physical Plant and Operations Committee (PPOC) meeting had no major agenda item and therefore was short and sweet. The single topic at that meeting was a synopsis of the May walk-around property inspection. The walk-around participants received a tour of the redecoration project, observed the paint condition of corridors in the East Building and considered the requirement to replace common area hardware (door knobs, peep holes, door bells, & repair of the marble threshold) in the residential corridors. The latter will be an agenda item in the next few months since condo policy requires us to maintain uniformity, and a basic esthetic, while providing guidance to residents changing or upgrading the hardware.

The Committee performed, along with Management, an almost two-hour property walk-around beginning at 7:00 p. m. on Thursday June 25, 2009. Many aspects of our landscaping as well as other items noted on the property by those who joined in the walk-around were discussed and documented for immediate or future attention. The next property walk-around will occur on Thursday, July 30 at 7:00 p.m. beginning in the main lobby. All residents are invited to attend and help by offering a new set of eyes as we view different aspects of our buildings and property.

At the next meeting, on July 9th, the Ad Hoc Decoration Committee will present to the PPOC three preliminary display boards of the proposed window boxes and carpet for the first level lobby redecoration for the Committee's review together with the revised contractor's proposal for the Committee's consideration. Thus, the PPOC will be able to make an informed recommendation to the FMC and the Board.

With all that said I have the opportunity now to lean forward in the foxhole and comment on what I see as the enemy on the horizon, coming in our direction: As the Finance Committee continues to fortify our Reserve Fund, the PPOC is confronted with the needs of maintenance, repairs, and replacement of the buildings' components while seeking to also maintain or enhance our amenities. Hence, this committee is also always exploring methods for saving money and reducing costs. Simultaneously, there is recognition of a need to "go green" and save energy. We need ideas ranging from facilities management suggestions, upkeep of common areas, and increasing the use of productivity and information technology to reduce overall costs.

On another level: what services can we forgo to control costs? For example, our budgeted utility costs are about \$300K per year. The residential corridor lights are lit 24/7 throughout the year. Should there be reduced corridor lighting after midnight until 5:00 a.m., associated with a motion detector that would immediately turn-on all the lights for someone entering the corridor? Should

we consider turning off after midnight the ceiling accent lights above the window boxes on the lobby level to conserve electricity? Our residents have the answers to these questions, as well as having ideas for other cost savings. In all probability there is no single cost savings solution initiative, but numerous smaller ideas that will achieve significant savings over the long haul.

Hence, the encroaching enemy from my foxhole view are rising costs. Rather than be in a defensive mode, it is better to counterattack by planning, introducing new ideas, and adopting technologies which will contain costs and permit modest condo fee increases while maintaining and even improving our quality of life.

As always, I welcome feedback on this article or any issue pertaining to the PPOC. This is your home! The PPOC will next meet July 9, 2009. The next property walk-around will occur on Thursday, July 30 at 7:00 p.m. beginning in the main lobby. We welcome you to join us.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Chair, Wynfred Joshua

The Financial Management Committee met on June 22, 2009. Total income for the month of May was \$304,466 with expenditures of \$202,503. Total income less expenditures amounted to \$101,963. The monthly Reserve Contribution was \$104,317 leaving a deficit before taxes of \$2,354. We note that expenditures were generally within projected budget figures. The closely watched accounts for electricity and water were well below budget allocations. We expect this trend to continue at least for the summer months.

Regarding delinquencies, 14 owners were 10 to 30 days in arrears for a total of \$8,192. One owner owed the Association \$1,261 for the last 60 days; while 2 owners were delinquent for longer than 60 days for a total of \$4,745. Our attorney is handling the cases of the last two owners. The owner who violated the by-laws still owes \$1,000 in penalties. In summary, as of May 31st past due assessments were \$15,198. Meanwhile by mid-June more than \$5,000 of the arrears had been paid. In any case, given the size of our condominium and our budget, the arrears are very small; generally, as long as they are under 5% it should not be an issue of concern.

The percentage of condos being rented remained unchanged at 21% or 119 units.

Our Committee discussed at some length the first floor renovation. After the July 9th meeting of the PPOC we expect to get the financial proposal for our consideration. For details on this project we refer to the reports of the Ad Hoc Decoration Committee the PPOC.

Under the rubric of new business the FMC requested the General Manager to have the treadmills in the exercise room checked and repaired as necessary.

The next meeting of the Financial Management Committee will be on Monday, July 20, 2009. We urge owners other to join us. We need and greatly value your participation and advice.



SECURITY, SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Chair, Robert J. "Bob" De mayo

At the June 10th meeting, the Management Office (MO) reported two incidents of speeding and one incident of driving in the garage without headlights, all occurring in mid-late May. In all cases, the violators were contacted. The MO representative then recapped the process for such violations. They are: first reported/confirmed incident – Verbal Notice of Observation/Warning from the MO; second reported/confirmed incident – Memo from the MO reinforcing the Warning with threat of a Covenants hearing; third reported/confirmed incident – Referral to a Covenants Hearing. The Chairman subsequently raised egregious speeders/rule violators in the garage with the Board of Directors as an enduring Safety concern to all, especially seniors and children. This resulted in a recommendation from the Chairman that due to rampant and endemic violations in the garage, the 3-strike process be collapsed to a 2-strike violation process of one Warning and then a Referral to a Covenants hearing for a fine. At the same time, the Chairman urged upping the stated 5 MPH speed limit to a more reasonable 10 MPH.

The MO representative also stated that the most frequent time for speeders and other garage violations is around 9:00 a.m. To curb egregious violators, the Chairman suggested a Security Officer be placed in a garage location some mornings to observe and report violators to the MO. Further, all *Neighborhood Watchers* are requested to lend their patrol efforts during this time to observe and report violations in the garage to include: speeding, driving without headlights, illegal turns, failure to yield right-of-way, and gross leaking of oil on our garage surfaces.

The MO received one Neighborhood Watch (NW) Report in May. There were reports of some vehicles in the garage with no visible Skyline House Decals; follow up was conducted by the MO. Further, work orders were created on all reported house maintenance items. The Chairman queried the MO representative on their established "process" when no visible Skyline House Decal on a vehicle parked on our properties is reported and then confirmed by a Security Officer investigation. Routinely, a memo from the MO is quickly placed on the windshield of the vehicle notifying the resident/owner to obtain and affix a decal to the vehicle. The MO also notifies the residence – registered to the parking spot - by phone or memo to obtain and affix a decal to the vehicle. MO opined that the usual reason for having no Skyline House Decal on a vehicle is that it is a resident's/owner's rental car or a borrowed car from friends or family. Our House Rules than call for the owner to both register the car at the front desk to obtain a temporary Skyline House Pass (i.e., adhesive white card to visibly affix inside a window) for the parked vehicle; it can be saved and reused over again for a year before it expires. It is handy for visiting relatives and it is readily available at the Front Desk; it must be displayed when the vehicle is parked in the resident's/owner's space.

Failure to register a vehicle and display a permanent decal or Temporary Pass while parked on our properties is a "Security" issue of common concern to all residents. No one wants vehicles illegally parked here; our common rules are established for a purpose. No one wants unsightly "junk" vehicles parked here since it adversely affects the value of our condominium property. No one wants the vehicles of nonresidents or strangers parked here during these times of an increased threat to our U.S. homeland and our heightened security consciousness in the DC area.

Moreover, a Skyline House Decal (permanent or temporary) is used both by the MO and Security to identify the registered owner in case of a security or safety incident or emergency. For instance, if emergency vehicles respond to our call (e.g., a fire) and a vehicle impeding their access is then discovered, the owner can be quickly notified. If there is no decal to ID the owner, the car will be immediately towed, perhaps damaged as emergency units arrive. The towing charges and potential damage in this case would be assumed by the owner. As another example, if the garage entrance door fails, the Security Officer dispatched to monitor vehicles entering our garage is under strict orders to check all entering vehicles for a decal or pass; if no decal or pass is visible, the vehicle will be denied entry until one is obtained and affixed.

Our MO and Security Officers have been requested to strictly enforce this reaffirmed Skyline House Decal and Temporary Pass policy both inside our garage and anywhere on our properties, including outside resident-owner parking spaces, and take firm action on all violators. In summary, no decal or pass on a parked vehicle at Skyline House means that the vehicle is in violation of our established rules and policy. The only exception is the standard guest vehicle registration in our Guest Parking spaces. If you are not currently displaying our decal or pass on your own vehicle or a rental or a borrowed one, go to the front desk now to get it registered!

The Chairman wrapped up discussions and stated that we now have a fair modicum of "passive" security procedures (i.e., prevent, observe, report, follow-up) including use of key fobs for access, use of garage door remote controls, our policy of enforcing parking decals/passes, strict control of Guest Parking, and use of Security Officers and Neighborhood Watchers patrolling our buildings and grounds. He posited questions for the committee, residents and owners (including those on the Board of Directors), to ponder for future SS&NWC discussions: *"Do you consider our Skyline House home safe and secure enough or do we need something more?"*

Finally, we salute our Security Officers: new addition, Officer Mike Webb who has 17 years of security experience and over 2 years with the CES company; Officer Tokunbo, a new addition on the night shift; newly trained Officers Mohammed and Mustafa, both of whom are prepared to cover any shift, as needed; Officer Elias who covers the night shift, as well as the afternoon shift of 3:00 PM-11:00 PM on Fridays; and Officer Waldemichael who works the Saturday morning shift. Blazers have been ordered for all officers. Please greet them on their rounds.



SKYLINE HOUSE CALENDAR

JULY 2009

(WWW.SHUOA.ORG)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	7	8 Security, Fire and Neighborhood Watch Comm. 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	9 Physical Plant & Operations Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	10	11
12	13 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	14	15 Covenants Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	16	17	18
19	20 Financial Management Committee 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	21	22 BOARD MEETING 7:00 p.m. W. Card Room	23	24	25
26	27 Library Open 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. East Penthouse	28	29	30 Physical Plant & Operations Committee Walk-Around 7:00 p.m. Main Lobby	31	
GOOD NEIGHBORS: LOUSIE ALBIN (703-379-1645) & NILDA VIQUEIRA (703-379-4239)						

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Norman Baker 1114W 671-6759 nbaker@fjc.gov
 Vice President, Charles Roberts, 914E 998-6080 charley.roberts@prodigy.net
 Treasurer, Maria Elena Schacknies 1302W 820-2239 cultura@att.net
 Secretary, Jean Orben, 205E 845-0119 rorben@msn.com
 Director, Budd Coutts, 1607E 931-3165 bcoutts@metronets.com
 Director, Al Lambert 709W 931-7314 myongal@verizon.net
 Director, Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 jusbob2u@verizon.net

MANAGEMENT OFFICE (Central # 703-578-4855)

General Manager, Gusbey Silva gusbey@shuoa.org
 Deputy General Manager, Tycia Haight tycia@shuoa.org
 Chief Engineer, Greg Grimm greg@shuoa.org
 Accountant, Lincoln O'Gilvey lincoln@shuoa.org
 Administrative Assist., Alice Rodrigues alice@shuoa.org
 Resident Services Coor., Noemi Najera noemi@shuoa.org
 Chief Web Developer, Joyce Routt jlrou@metronets.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Financial Management Wynfred Joshua 1414W 820-4471 diawin@metronets.com
 Physical Plant/Operations Al Lambert 709W 931-7314 myongal@verizon.net
 Covenants Joseph Livingston 814 W 931-6923 joeandsonya@aol.com
 Security, Fire, & Neighborhood Watch Robert De Mayo 1213E 575-4464 jusbob2u@verizon.net
 Recreation Vacant

GOOD NEIGHBORS COORDINATORS

Toska Prather 1003W 379-7849 t_pra@verizon.net
 Virginia Fissmer 601W 379-2901

EDITOR --- Norman Baker 1114W nbaker@fjc.gov 671-6759

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Skyline House Unit Owners' Association, Inc.
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Falls Church VA 22041-3711