

**SOCIETY HILL AT
PISCATAWAY
CONDOMINIUM
ASSOCIATION, INC**

550 Chesterfield Drive

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management@
societyhillpiscataway.com

Management Office Hours
M-F 8:00 - 5:00
Sat, Sun, Holidays Closed

Board of Trustees

Kevin Wine—2011
President

345 Lancaster Court

Atif Nazir—2013
Vice President

541 Manchester Court

Greg Machyowsky—2011
Treasurer

448 Lancaster Court

Doug Sanford—2012
Trustee-at-Large

44 Canterbury Court

Carlisle Chan—2012
Trustee-at-Large

30 Canterbury Court

Toyce Collins—2013
Trustee-at-Large

218 Hampshire Court

Ritesh Betala—2012
Trustee-at-Large

126 Bedford Court

**2012 Board Meeting
Schedule**

**Third Monday of each
month at the Clubhouse**

Starting at 7:00 PM

Visit us on the Web at
www.societyhillpiscataway.com

Hill Bits

Below are a list of important pieces of information we're calling "Hill Bits".

2012 Calendar

The 2012 Calendar is now up on our website. The calendar has lots of great information including Recycling/Trash pick-up days, Board Meeting dates, and Property Tax/Sewer Bill due dates, as well as a list of Holidays. You can find it by clicking on the Calendar tab on the left side of the Society Hill website.

Mail & Mailbox Keys

If you lose your mailbox key, you will need to call the Piscataway Post Office. Their number is 732-981-0740. You can also call them if your mailbox is damaged or removed and you need to collect your mail. And if you plan to go on vacation for an extended period of time, make sure you have someone to pick up your mail, as otherwise it will be taken back to the post office.

Dumpsters

If you miss a trash pickup or recycling day, don't leave your trash out. We have dumpsters located on Canterbury, Lancaster, the forest lot on Hampshire, and the

Clubhouse, all of which are available for our residents to use for all types of garbage. Just make sure to put the trash IN the dumpster, not OUTSIDE it.

Crime Watch

Recently we have had reports of someone jiggling the handle of entry doors as if trying to gain access to the units. These incidents have all occurred in the Condo Units. None of the attempts have been successful, but make sure to keep your door locked, even when you are at home. And of course, as they say, if you see something, say something.

Street Signs

Following on the heels of our initial signage replacement, we are adding and replacing some additional street signs in the complex—including larger, more reflective 15 MPH and 25 MPH signs—and replacing the Narrow Bridge, Hidden Drive, and yellow "curve ahead" chevrons on Buckingham Drive by Chesterfield. We are also installing Slow Children signs through the development. The result should be more awareness of the rules of the road in our community, a

reduction in speeding, and an increase in the overall safety of the roads in our development.

Street Lights

From time to time, the street lights in Society Hill get damaged, burn out, or fall over. The Street Lights are PSEG's property, so they are responsible for fixing them. If you notice a problem with a street light, call PSE&G first, then call the office so we can also call. The more people who call, the quicker the response will be.

Pay Online, Save Time

Ever forgotten to pay your monthly maintenance fee? Tired of writing checks every month? Then stop by the office and pick up a Direct Debit form. We can draw your maintenance fee right from your checking account each month, through Authorize.net. The form takes just a few minutes to fill out, and you just need to bring a voided check with you. And best of all, there's no charge! So stop on by or fill out and fax over the form on the website, and never pay a late fee again.



YOUR AD HERE

Starting in January we will be accepting advertisements from residents, owners, and local businesses. The Newsletter reaches more than 750 people every month, so it's a great way to get the word out about your business, event, or organization. A variety of sizes will be available. If you are interested in advertising in the Society Hill Newsletter, contact the management office for pricing, sizes, and requirements.



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**Special points of
interest:**

- New Parking Plan
- Snow Removal
- Tree Removal and Landscaping

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The Society Hill News

December 2011 Edition

New Maintenance Fees Announced

At the December Board of Trustees meeting, the 2012 budget was ratified with a \$3/month (\$1/month for Mt. Laurel units) maintenance fee decrease. The new maintenance fee for 2012 will be **\$168/month (\$56/month for Mt. Laurel units.)**

Included with this newsletter is a sheet of **payment coupons** for 2012, as well as a **direct debit form** for those owners interested in having their maintenance fees automatically debited from their checking account.

For those unit owners who already take advantage of direct debit, you do NOT need to send in a new form—the change will be done automatically.

If you are set up for automatic bill pay through your bank, you **MUST** let your bank know about the new fee.

Finally, for all those who would like to pay online manually, you can still pay by credit or debit at www.societyhillpiscataway.com

Annual Meeting Update

The Annual Meeting/Board Election was scheduled for December 16, 2011. Unfortunately, we did not have enough completed proxies to hold the meeting, but had a great Holiday Party.

The new date for the Annual Meeting is **Friday, January 13th at 7:30 PM**. We still need more proxies, however, so if you haven't turned in yours yet, please do so soon.

There's Snow Place Like Home for the Holidays



The one up-side of the surprise pre-Halloween snowstorm was that it gave us a chance to do a "readiness check" for any really bad snow down the line. While the plows worked well, we identified some things that the community should know for the next big snow:

Be Courteous

Although it may be inconvenient to maneuver around snow removal equipment, please yield right-of-way. If it wasn't for the equipment, you would be going nowhere. The path of the equipment may not always make sense, but there is a method and a pattern, and every obstacle reduces our efficiency. Remember that Chesterfield and Buckingham are town roads, and by township ordinance there is no parking when roads are snow covered. Also, please

avoid parallel parking on other association roads during a storm if at all possible. We will plow around you if we have to, but it's less efficient, and you're going to be in for some serious digging.

Finally, just because it's snowing and the ground is covered doesn't mean you can park in others' reserved spots. In every storm we receive multiple requests to tow illegally parked cars.

Be Patient

Snowstorms can make everyone testy. We realize many residents may still need to get to work, and we work very hard to begin servicing the storms even BEFORE the snow stops falling. In case anyone has forgotten, under the arrangements with past snow removal contractors, we often had to wait for several hours AFTER the storm ENDED before clearing began. On top of the delay, they would plow all the snow up against the back of the cars, leaving everyone with a lot of digging.

After two consecutive years of

record-setting snowstorms, the association has acquired two additional pieces of snow removal equipment: a large 2-yard wheel-loader with a 14' snow pusher, and a second pickup-truck with an 8' straight plow. This brings our total equipment inventory to 5 machines. This will increase our snow removal productivity considerably, and provide us with some backup should one or more machines go down.

Snow removal operations are conducted in a series of prioritized and overlapping stages. The first stage is to open the main thru-roads (Buckingham, Chesterfield, Hampshire, Canterbury, Harwick, and Lancaster). This takes about an hour, and may be done more than once to prevent deep snow accumulation. The snow is plowed to the side of the road, unless there is a parking lot along the road, in which case the snow is plowed to the center of the road. This allows residents that really must get out or in at least some hope of doing so. The second stage is to remove the snow from the center of the

Snow Place Like Home for the Holidays (cont.)

road and plow the dead-end streets (Townsend, Vernon, Sheffield, Norwich, Manchester, Chippenham, Abbot, Berkshire, and Bedford). As the storm ends, several additional crew come in and the third stage begins, usually concurrent with ongoing stage two operations. Two to four work crews are formed, the condo building breezeway steps and breezeways are shoveled, then the sidewalks, and then the townhouse walkways. The association is still shoveling the townhouse walkways as a courtesy, in spite of specific language in the association's by-laws to the contrary. Finally, in the fourth stage, the parking spots are cleared, often concurrent with ongoing stage three operations. Stage four may take two or three days to complete as there are 1,147 parking spots to clear and a lot of cars in the way.

In spite of all the additional personnel and equipment,

snow removal in this complex remains a difficult, tedious, and time-consuming ordeal. In the last major snow event we had the initial clean up down to about 24 hours. We'll do even better the next time, but still some patience will be required. In the large storms over the last two years, we had Society Hill plowed and open well before the town and even the state had their roads plowed, so even though you could get out of Society Hill, you weren't getting much further.

In large storms, if at all possible, please try to avoid using your car. Snow removal operations are most efficient if the equipment has a clear path. Every minute a piece of equipment is blocked or busy freeing a stuck car is another minute of plowing lost. And every time the plow has to stop is another chance of the plow itself getting stuck! This happened several times last year. In large storms, every minute counts

and the machines need to be in full service moving snow. Otherwise, we get behind, and more cars get stuck, and then we get even more behind.

In the distant past, an organized effort was made to clear parking spots in bulk by getting everyone to move their car at the same time. This is obviously far more efficient than clearing spaces one at a time. However, the degree of coordination this requires is not always practical. When it happens, that's great, and if not, usually by chance large chunks of spots open up when people get back to work. We still welcome assistance - the only thing we ask is that you try and wait until we are done with stage one and two and all the snow is out of the middle of the all the roads. And when cleaning off your car, we don't mind if you throw the snow back in the road (we have machines that can easily clean this up), but please avoid moving

your car in to the road unless your road has been completely plowed.

Be Safe

Snow plows are big, heavy, and cumbersome. Operator hours can be long and operator workload is high. Visibility is often not good, especially out the back. Give this equipment plenty of room. Unbelievably, every winter we have a few cars trying to race the plows or play chicken. These are dangerous maneuver for a car on a slippery road. Our big equipment weighs 10 times as much as a small car. Impact may scratch the paint on the plow, but meanwhile your car will be destroyed.

With some luck, the October snow storm will be the only one, and we won't need to plow a single flake.

Trees, Plantings, and Landscaping

Now that winter is here, most people tend to forget about the trees, bushes, and plants outside. However, this is the time that the Management Office starts to plan for next year's landscaping, and we figured we'd give you a heads-up on what's coming next year.

Trees

This year we went about pruning and cutting down several of the trees in Society Hill for two main reasons. First, dead, dying, or storm damaged trees present a serious hazard to vehicles, people, and buildings.

Second, in the original site plan, many fruit-bearing and pitch-dropping trees were planted in locations that overhung parking spaces. Because of this, some

residents wound up with very messy cars, and therefore some owners requested we remove the offending arbors.

Unbeknownst to us, the township of Piscataway has a tree-cutting ordinance that even applies to Society Hill, and a permit is required for removing trees over 3" in diameter on any property over 1 acre. This adds to the cost and overhead of removing trees, and therefore requests to remove nuisance trees will have to be in writing, may require Board review, and will have to be batched with other removals, so expect some delay.

Plantings

The ordinance mentioned above also requires that we

plant new trees whenever we remove any. So, on the subject of planting, this winter we will be doing a survey of the property to identify where trees and bushes need to be placed and what types should be planted. The goal is to do all outstanding planting in the spring of 2012, and to honor as many of the owner requests for foliage as possible.

Landscaping

2011 was a difficult year for landscaping in the development. Between the weather and our attempt to avoid using any unnecessary chemicals in the soil, weeds in some areas got out of control. Fortunately, next year we plan to do some weed treatments before they come up, and then tackle them

in a more timely fashion. We have also began mulching, and will continue though the winter, weather permitting.

So for all you fans of flora and foliage, 2012 should be a great year.



Maintenance Tips—Winter Warnings



It's time for all things cold, and that means a new list of handy tips to keep you and your home warm, safe, and secure.

Winterizing

With electricity and gas prices as high as they are, as the weather turns colder, many of us try to stave off using the heater for as long as possible. Others turn it off completely if they go on vacation. The unintended consequence of this can be a freezing of your pipes. Water that freezes in pipes expands and can strain or break those pipes. So if you go on vacation,

make sure to keep your thermostat no lower than 50°F, and bring it up slowly when you return. Also, if your unit is unoccupied, make sure to winterize your unit to prevent freezing.

Snow

As mentioned earlier, Society Hill takes care of shoveling the walkways as a courtesy, however it really is homeowner responsibility. As such, if you want to do it yourself, feel free! Just make sure you use ice melt afterwards to prevent ice buildup and slippage.

Breezeways and Stairs

The Association has provided buckets of grit in the breezeways of the condominium buildings to spread on the stairs. The grit provides traction—it does not melt the ice. We changed over to grit because the misapplication of ice melt can be haz-

ardous. Ice-melt will still be dispensed by the staff.

Ice

Be very careful on all stairs, walkways, and parking lots. While most ice is visible during the day, black ice and icy streets at night can be very difficult to spot. Watch carefully, especially if you know there's a place where water pools.

Skylights

If you have a skylight, make sure that it is not cracked or leaking. Since the skylight is unit owner responsibility, the Association won't be repairing/replacing them until the roofing project occurs. However, if it's an emergency, we can recommend someone to do the replacement. Just call the Management Office for more details.

Dryer Vents, Lint, and Leaks

While not a winter weather tip, this problem has reared its head

recently, and further explanation has been requested. Most people know that lint buildup in your dryer vent can make drying clothes less effective, however did you also know it can be a source of leaks? Normally, water vapor created when clothes dry evaporates up the dryer vent. However, if the lint completely clogs the pipe, the lint can act as a giant sponge, and when that sponge is full, the water collects in the vent, drips onto the OCV (plywood boards) and shingles, and rots the wood. So even if you clean your lint trap after every dryer cycle, make sure to have your dryer vents cleaned out once a year. It can't hurt and is relatively inexpensive. And you'll have the added benefit of quicker drying clothes.

New Parking Plan Application/Survey

You may have noticed the addition of a parking application with your Newsletter this month. The Board of Trustees wants to know how many owners would be interested in renting a second reserved parking spot for a fee of \$8/month.

The location of the second reserved spots would be predetermined and shown on a map of the development so you would know ahead of time where your second spot would be located if you chose to rent it.

If you decided not to rent a second spot, that spot would remain a free spot and would not be rented to anyone else.

Every attempt will be made to locate a second spot as close as possible to the corresponding unit. For about half the units this can be right next to the existing

spot, however that isn't possible for the other half of the units.

Owners must be in good-standing to rent a second spot, and a minimum rental duration of 6 months will be required. Rentals would begin on the first of the month and be charged to your maintenance fee account.

Any unit owner who currently has a second assigned spot previously granted by the Board will have to begin renting that second spot. If an owner sells his or her unit, the new owners must contact us to renew the spot assignment if they wish.

Once we receive the applications, the Board will evaluate the demand and determine whether to put the plan into effect. While we understand that no plan is perfect, this one allows unit owners to obtain an extra re-

served spot while making sure that demand is regulated, thus keeping some spots available for visitors and third cars.

So if you're interested in obtaining a second parking spot, please fill out the application included with this newsletter, and send it in by **January 13,**

2011. Keep in mind that this application does not bind you or the Association in any way.

If you have any questions, please contact the Management Office and we'll answer as best we can.

