

**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—2014
President
345 Lancaster Court

Atif Nazir—2013
Vice President
541 Manchester Court

Greg Machyowsky—2014
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 Berkshire 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



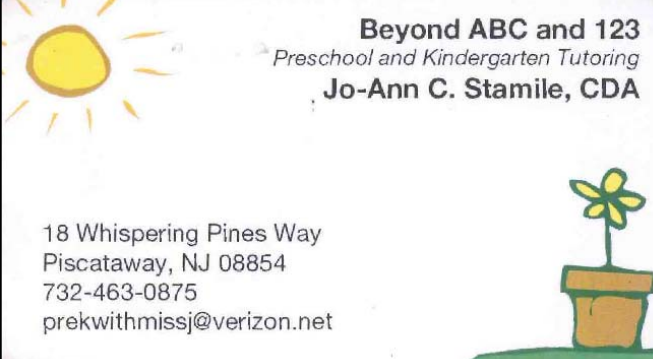
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For Free: 2000 CY clean fill dirt.
Will help load. Call Society Hill Man-
agement Office: 732 463 3434

Shed Doors: Need an exterior
closet (shed) door replaced? The
Association has a shed door re-
placement program: \$340 for
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knob extra). If interested, call the
Society Hill Management Of-
fice—732 463 3434.

Unit for Rent: \$1850/mo. Spacious
2 BR, 2 1/2 Bath townhouse for rent.

- Two second floor bedroom
suites, each with full bath
 - Formal Dining Room
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with fireplace
 - Fully equipped eat-in kitchen
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 - Patio with outdoor storage area
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 - New furnace, air conditioning
unit and windows
 - Stair glide in place for easy ac-
cess to second floor
- * No pets

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Call Phyllis Blythe: 732 245-2528



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**Special points of
interest:**

- Road Paving
- President's Message
- May/July Meeting High-
lights
- How Condo Associations
Work

Inside this issue:

What is a Condo- minium Associa- tion?	2
May/July Board Meeting Highlights	3
Advertisements and Classifieds	4

The Society Hill News

August 2012 Edition

Summer Picnic—Friday August 24th

The annual Society Hill at Piscataway picnic was originally scheduled for August 3rd. However, due to scheduling conflicts, it has been moved to Friday, August 24th from 4PM to dusk by the right side of building 5 on Canterbury Court. There will be food (halal and non-halal meats, as well as vegetarian options), drinks and music, and all owners and resi-

dents are welcome to attend. As in previous years, we are looking for volunteers to help make the picnic a great success. We need people to chop fruit, prepare corn, help on the grill, and help serve the food and drinks. If you're able to help out with the event, please contact the management office and let us know what you'd be willing



and able to do.

Road Paving and Parking Update



The Township of Piscataway has been planning to repave Chesterfield and Buckingham Drive, both of which are Township Roads. At the beginning of August they

milled the roads, basically taking off the top coat of asphalt in preparation for laying the new coat. The paving itself will start at 6AM on Thursday, August 16th on Chesterfield Drive and 6AM on Friday August 17th on Buckingham Drive. While the paving will take a few hours to do, the new asphalt will need to sit for a few more hours in order to harden.

Due to the paving, cars on some courts will be unable to enter or exit those courts for a good portion of the day. As

such, we have collaborated with the township to create a plan for those residents who will be inconvenienced on those days. **Included in this packet is a map and explanation of how paving will operate and suggestions for parking.** Please consult the insert, and if you have any questions, please contact the management office at 732 463 3434.

Thank you for your consideration during this time, and hopefully the repaving will go smoothly and with as little inconvenience as possible.

President's Message

It has been 17 months since we began the sidewalk and bikepath restoration project in late February of 2011. While I was not surprised by the scope of the project, I was a bit surprised by how long it took. Factoring in the winter shutdown and about 8 weeks of on and off rain in the spring of 2011, actual working time has been about 14 months. To date, we have completed approximately 3,700 feet of sidewalk and 2,600 feet of bikepath, for a total of 1.2 miles of walkway. We consumed nearly one acre of paving stones - that's over 120,000 individual pavers. We have dug approximately 7,000 feet of trench

and buried nearly 30,000 feet of communications conduit. Over 12,000 feet of new irrigation piping has been installed, along with hundreds of new sprinkler heads. We've added 12 new irrigation zones, including several drip zones. Nearly 2,000 feet of retaining wall has been installed, along with over 500 berry plants behind those walls. At the clubhouse, a section of the pool fence has been relocated to free the vending machine and a new patio area has been made. We are down to the final landscaping details and cleanup.

While we have achieved a lot, I do realize it has taken a while. In the face of the township-imposed deadline this year, the priority has been on production, with everything else taking a back seat. I wanted to thank everyone for their patience with the length of the project, the temporary inconvenience it may have caused, and the temporary mess it has created. It will all be over soon.

From my perspective, the last year and a half has not been easy. Construction work seems to have its own unique set of challenges - ever-changing pri-

President's Message (cont.)

orities, broken equipment, material lead-times, personnel issues, public-relations, limited resources, unforeseen problems, and the real boss – the weather. Overcoming all this, sequencing the work, keeping everyone busy, and not spending a fortune in the process is no small task.

While the majority of residents seem to be able to look beyond the construction and have had positive comments, I do hear occasional complaints, either directly or indirectly. As you may recall me mentioning in the past, the benefit of us taking on a project like this ourselves is that we can do things that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive. The downside is that it might take longer than if it was contracted out. As there are several more large projects

in our future, the real question before the board will be how much is it worth to us to get things done faster.

In all the time I've sat on our board, it has been my objective, as well as the objective of many of the other members, to increase resident involvement and interaction in the community. Accomplishing this is not easy, as there is no single or direct solution. Instead, the answer is in a collection of efforts. Some are obvious, such as community events like the yearly picnic, the garage sale, and the pool party and Halloween party we did a few times, information sources such as this newsletter and the WEB site, and resident committees and meetings. Then there are those which are not so obvious, like hiring the local kids for summer work, concrete

things such as sidewalks and park benches, and other things such as the berries.

Of all the predicted hazards in Society Hill, the one hazard that was actually causing injury to our residents was the old walkways. That is why it became the top priority, despite a long list of other critical repairs and improvements demanding attention. At the same time, the project presented an opportunity - an opportunity to not only build new walkways, but also work on the community building problem. The aesthetics of the paving stones, the retaining walls, the places to sit, the interesting plants, and soon the flowers, are all pieces of a larger project to get residents out and away from their computers and TVs and reestablish the links between them. From being out on the

property all day long, I can say we have made considerable progress. The place has never been so alive. Will it last—I don't know.

Looking forward, we have several other major projects in the queue. The next priority is our maintenance facility, which is desperately needed for equipment and material storage. Concurrently, we have to get the re-roofing project started. Also in the works are the preliminary approvals for the pond renovation, which will likely incorporate either the removal or landscaping of the large pile of dirt at the end of Lancaster. So while there is still a lot to do, keep in mind that it is all a necessary part of making our community closer, more attractive, and better in general.

- Kevin Wine, President
Society Hill at Piscataway

How Does a Condo Association Work?

Most owners and residents know that Society Hill at Piscataway has a homeowner's Association which is governed by a Board of Trustees, but many aren't sure how that Association or its Board works. As such, we will be presenting articles over the next few newsletters that give information about how Condominium Associations and their Boards Work.

The Board is a representative body. The board members are generally empowered to act on behalf of the Association by a simple majority vote. Although many Association members believe that members should be permitted to vote on all or many of the Association's decisions; that is not the case. Decisions requiring a vote of the members are few and may include things like the election

of new board members, approval of governing document amendments, approval of new capital expenditures and approval of special assessments.

Open Board meetings are generally the most stressful part of any board member's tenure. People who come to open meetings are usually not there to let the board members know what a wonderful job they are doing. Instead, at best, they are there to listen, note problems and offer suggestions, and, at worst, they are there to complain, berate and embarrass. In spite of this, open board meetings should be embraced.

Open meetings are required by law. Both the Condominium Act, N.J.S.A. 45:22A-46, require that, with limited exceptions, if the Board is going to make a binding decision, that decision

must be made at a public meeting open to attendance by all unit owners. (Note that the board may meet in workshop sessions but may not make decisions at these workshop sessions.). This means that the membership must be allowed to watch. This does not mean that the membership participates in the decision.

Further, all unit owners must have been given adequate prior notice of the meeting. The notice requirements are ordinarily specified in each association's by-laws, although N.J.A.C. 5:20-1.2 actually defines "adequate notice" in the condominium context and this section might be applied by analogy to home owners associations.

Topics specifically reserved for executive session are:

- (1) Any matter the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy. Often this involves debtor account collection decisions.
- (2) Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiations. Often this involves transition decisions and vendor negotiations.
- (3) Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in



How Does a Condo Association Work? (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer. This generally includes attorney-client communications. Although there are exceptions, when in doubt, attorney communications and decisions requiring substantive attorney involvement should not be made at open meetings. Note that involving the attorney in a decision cannot be used as a sham to permit decisions that would otherwise be required to be made at an open public meeting to be made in a closed session.

- (4) Any matter involving the employment, promotion, discipline or dismissal of a specific officer or employee of the association.

Besides open meetings being required by law, they are the keystone of Association communications. Association members can hear, first hand, what the Board is doing. Further, open meetings provide a forum where Board members can stay in touch with membership concerns via the public comment session. Although associations are not compelled to have public comment sessions, not having public comment sessions is unwise. Although it

must be explained that the membership does not participate in the decision making and they do not vote, excluding public comment is a recipe for mistrust, unrest and resentment.

Particular open meeting formats vary however, each association should work with its manager, attorney, accountant, engineer etc. and formulate the format that works best. Often board members and other residents hear of "hot topics" long before others do. Anticipation and preparation are essential to smoothly addressing "hot topics". In fact, more often than not, "hot topics" are

better first raised by the board at open meetings rather than allowing the members to raise them first. Members generally appreciate this preemption. The Board appears more informed and involved and it often steals the thunder of those who may be lying in wait to spring a hot topic on the Board.

As a final note, actions taken at board meetings and membership meetings must all be memorialized in written minutes.

Our community functions best with a well-informed, active membership, and we hope that this information will help.

May/July Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Trustees met on Monday, May 21st, 2012 at 7PM for its monthly meeting. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- The Management reported that a revised land survey was being performed along Hampshire Court to determine if the Association could use its own land for a Maintenance Garage
- The Management reported that the mulching was currently in progress, as was the planting of shrubs, berry plants, and trees along the walkway and around the buildings
- The Management reported that the plan to recycle the concrete sidewalk slabs into base material for the path project had been completed
- The Management reported on the develop-

ments to the pond renovation project

- The Management reported on the developments to the re-roofing project

- The Board approved the proposals by Stires Engineering and Eastern States Environmental for a Topographical Survey and Letter of Interpretation/representation before the NJDEP for the area by the bridge on Hampshire Court, in preparation for the planned construction of a Maintenance Garage on that land
- The Board approved the reallocation of unused ice control and mulch funds to the purchase of bushes, berries, and trees for the development

The June, 2012 meeting was cancelled, however the Board of Trustees met on Monday, July 16th, 2012 at 7 PM for its

monthly meeting. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- The Management reported that about 65 units have taken advantage of the second parking spot plan at this point, and that most owners who have taken advantage of the program have responded positively to it
- The Management reported on the progress of the Pond project, the walkway project, the planting, and the search for personnel
- The Board approved a resolution allowing the management to waive late fees in very specific circumstances
- The Board approved a resolution allowing employees working on capital projects to be paid from capital reserve funds
- The Board moved to

eliminate fees for guests to the pool

- The Board moved to purchase concrete tables for the new patio area by the pool
- The Board moved to dissolve the Resident Advisory Committee and reform it into a Covenants Committee

For a more comprehensive description of the meeting, please check the minutes available on the website. The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for August 20th, 2012 at 7PM at the clubhouse.

