



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

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CRIME ALERT

Multiple package thefts have been reported over the last few weeks. Please keep an eye out for suspicious individuals and notify the office and/or the Piscataway police.

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The Society Hill News

December 2013 Edition

Maintenance Fees Same in 2014



At the December 16th Board of Trustees Meeting the Board ratified the 2014 budget

(included here as an insert), which sets the maintenance fees at \$165/month for regular units and \$55/month for affordable units. This is the same rate as from 2013, so if you are signed up for automatic bill pay or automatic direct draft you will not have to make any changes.

Moreover, in this newsletter, we have included a payment coupon sheet that you can attach to your payment when you send it in. Please note you are not required to do so – this is just a

tool to help you keep track of when you have paid your maintenance fee.

We are also including on the reverse of that page the form for recurring direct draft. By filling out that form and sending it in, the Association can pull the maintenance fees from your checking account every month automatically for no charge! And as always, you can pay your maintenance fee by credit card on the Society Hill website at www.societyhillpiscataway.com

President's Message

For many, the end of the year and the holidays are a time of rest and celebration. For me, it is also a time of reflection. It has been another crazy year for me and the crew, as we continue to work through the large list of repairs, improvements, and complaints faced by the association. 2014 promises to be even more intense, with several projects large and small demanding attention.

Five years have passed since we started making plans to dredge and improve the pond, and finally this fall the required DEP permitting was completed and work was able to begin. Before Thanksgiving, most of the muck was removed from the bottom of the pond and piled on the shore where it will dry out over the winter with minimal odor. The dirt pile was temporarily moved to extract the topsoil

trapped underneath. In early November we contacted the town to see if any additional local permits would be required for the project, received no response, and assumed the DEP permitting was sufficient. Just before Thanksgiving, we received word that local permits were required, for which we then applied. Once approved, and weather permitting, we will

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Newsletter Going Digital for Non-Residents



For those of you who have been reading it for a while, you should notice that the newsletter contains important information about the goings on in the development. Some of this information can only be found in the

newsletter, in fact, making reading the publication even more important.

At the same time, printing and distributing the newsletter has become a not-insignificant cost, and so, at the November Board of Trustees meeting, the Board moved to stop physical distribution of the newsletter to non-resident unit owners. All residents will still get a physical copy of the newsletter delivered to their doors, however those owners who do not live in the development will receive an

email with a link to the newsletter.

In order to facilitate this process, we need to make sure we have every non-resident unit owner's email address. While we have most of them, we want to make sure that we don't miss anyone. So, if you do not see an email with a link to this newsletter in the near future, please contact the management office and let us know so we can make sure you're on the list.

2013 Annual Meeting and Election Results

On December 18th, 2013, the Association held the 2013 Annual Meeting and Election. A quorum was achieved, and counting of the ballots took place. The results of the election for trustees are as follows:

- Atif Nazir: 106
- Gregory Machyowsky: 95
- Donald Thomas: 4
- Brenda Hill: 6

Congratulations to Atif Nazir and Gregory Machyowsky on their reelections.

Also at the meeting were 12 agenda items which were voted on. Note that capital expendi-

tures require a 75% vote for approval. The numbers in parentheses after the votes are the totals from the ballots of the 2013 Special Meeting that never achieved a quorum (yes,no).

- 1) Motion to skip the reading of the 2012 Annual Meeting Minutes: Passed
- 2) Motion to open and tally ballots from the 2013 special meeting for informational purposes: Passed
- 3) Motion to continue hard-copy delivery of newsletter to local residents: Passed
- 4) Motion to allow candidates 1.5 pages for their candidate statement: Passed 22-10-2
- 5) Motion to allocate \$65,000 to install equipment to provide high-speed internet service: Passed 30-1-2 (119,100)
- 6) Motion to allocate \$10,000 to purchase and install a test set of security cameras: Passed 30-1-2 (160,62)
- 7) Motion to allocate \$6,000 to purchase and install entrance signs at the Route 18 and Buckingham Drive entrances: Failed 22-9-2 (109,113)
- 8) Motion to allocate \$40,000 to pursue creation of new parking spaces at the end of dead-end streets: Failed: 2-30-1 (89,131)
- 9) Motion to allocate \$15,000 to construct dumpster corals: Passed 30-1-2 (140,81)

- 10) Motion to allocate \$20,000 to install walkway on Hampshire Court between Harwick and Lancaster and between building 22 and 26: Passed (117,103)
- 11) Motion to allocate \$3,500 to install edge stones around buildings 19 and 26: Passed (123,96)
- 12) Motion to allocate \$15,000 to construct patio area on northeast of clubhouse: Passed (119,102)

Lastly, congratulations to Unit 372, who won a free month maintenance fee in the random drawing.

President's Message (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)
continue to do what we can over the winter. As mentioned in prior newsletters, we still plan to use the dirt from the sidewalk project, combined with some of the muck from the pond, to form an observation hill on the west side of the pond approximately where the dirt was piled before it was temporarily moved last month. The landscaped hill would be 10-15' high (it was previously over 20' high) and contain a trail, a com-

munity BBQ area, seating areas, and possibly a covered seating structure at the top. This would save a considerable amount of money on soil disposal costs, while at the same time creating a desirable landscape feature on the property. Unfortunately, we are encountering resistance from the town's landscape architect, in spite of the fact that the hill is outside the 100-year flood boundary and outside the town's design concern. The remaining muck from the pond,

which is high in desirable organic content, was going to be mixed in with the dirt in the large fields behind buildings 17, 44, 43, and possibly 38, in an effort to improve soil conditions. The key to a healthy, low-maintenance lawn is good soil. Unfortunately, and again, we are likely to encounter resistance from the town on this plan, requiring constant pesticide applications, fertilizer, and water to maintain the quality of lawn some residents desire. The pond project

also presents an opportunity to finally use reclaimed pond water to irrigate the property. In past dry summers, we have used over 5,000,000 gallons of water costing over \$50,000, much of which runs right off and in to the pond. In recent years, we have tried to be more conservative for a number of reasons, however if we could use pond water we could save a considerable amount of money and be able

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Winter Weather—What to do When it Snows

Winter is here, and by the looks of what we've had so far, it's shaping up to be a snowy one. Therefore, it's important to remember what the procedure is for winter storms, what the Association does, and what the residents should do.

Plowing: The Association is responsible for plowing all the internal streets, and has taken up the responsibility of plowing Chesterfield and Buckingham. We use a combination of our two snow plows and two load-

ers to plow the streets. This usually happens after either the storm has ended, or after about 5 or 6 inches of snow are on the ground. If the snow event is significant and happens during the day of a weekday, we may have time to begin plowing the parking spots since there aren't too many cars around. However, if it is on a weekend when there are a lot of vehicles around, or there is only a little bit of snow, we cannot plow the individual spots. Please keep in mind that

the responsibility for clearing parking spots is really on the residents, and while we do what we can, it is impractical to completely clear all the parking spots down to bare pavement.

Ice Control: While section 4.01 of the By-Laws clearly states that the unit owner is responsible for clearing his or her walkway, as an attempt to help people, the Association sends the crew out to clean and salt. The amount of snow and the temperature

forecast determine how we do those tasks (whether we use the blowers or shovels, whether we salt once or multiple times, etc.) Please keep in mind, however, that all unit owners are advised to check their walkways carefully and if the conditions are still icy to apply their own ice control methods, as overnight refreezing can occur.

And if you are in a condo unit, please make use of the buckets of grit and ice melt.

President's Message (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)
 to irrigate more. With all the muck out of the pond and the original depth restored, the pond holds over 1,000,000 gallons, which should be sufficient to last between rains. There are some design challenges with re-claimed water systems, but they are surmountable, and in spite of possible resistance, we will probably install the required piping for the system while we have the opportunity. A 4" re-claimed water main was already buried under the sidewalk on Chesterfield when we replaced that walk 2 years ago, making it possible to connect all 4 irrigation loops to the pond water without digging up any more streets or walks.

At the recent annual meeting, funding for a variety of capital improvement projects was approved (see article on page 2), including the start of community-wide internet service.

In the same way other groups use their collective bargaining power to their advantage, we have to consider opportunities to use our collective power to our advantage. Along these lines, the association as a collective should be able to provide gigabit speed internet service to the entire development at a fraction of the current total cost to the residents. The same system would also permit the restoration of bulk television service, as provided for in the original site plan, for considerably less than the current cost to our residents. The results of the communications survey conducted in October 2012 indicated residents are paying around \$112/month for communications services. This equates to over \$730,000 a year. I'm sure we could duplicate the same or better service for less, recoup the capital equipment investment, pay for the ongoing maintenance, and still come out way ahead. The

current funding approval will allow us to install the backbone infrastructure and connect the clubhouse and buildings 3 and 39, since those two buildings will be pre-wired for internet as we replace their roofs. For the technically curious, the current design will provide symmetric gigabit PoE switched Ethernet service over CAT6 twisted-pair copper to each unit from a switch at the end of each building. A 144 strand fiber-optic ring backbone will provide redundant service to the building switch, terminating at fully redundant, auto fail-over switches in the yet-to-be constructed maintenance garage facility. A looped high-voltage power distribution system will provide redundant power to the building switches, powered by redundant sources at the maintenance building and backed up by an 80kW diesel generator with sufficient fuel storage to run through a two week power outage. Fiber

service to the complex will drop from two different poles off Morris Ave., connected to two physically different service-provider head-ends, and traversing two physically different routes to the maintenance building. The system is designed to survive a catastrophic single point backbone cabling or component failure with no service degradation. The redundancy is necessary in order to provide the level of reliability residents will expect and the reliability needed by other systems sharing the same network such as VOIP phones and IP-based security cameras. Video surveillance has been very effective in the few areas where it was already installed, and funding for the trial installation of IP-based cameras was also approved at the annual meeting, likely in the Canterbury and Vernon Ct. areas.

Another project in the works

(Continued on page 4)

November/December Board Meeting Highlights



The Society Hill at Piscataway Board of Trustees met on Monday, November 18th, 2013 at 7:00PM for its monthly meeting. The following are highlights from that meeting:

- Management Reported on the monthly financial status of the Association.
- Management suggested a

- purchase of 20,000 forever stamps before the postal service increases its price in January 2014.
- The Board moved to switch the employee health insurance to AmeriHealth starting December 1 as the current Horizon BC/BS plan is being dropped due to the Affordable Care Act.
- The Board moved to distribute the newsletter electronically to all non-resident unit owners.
- The Board moved to have management draft a more rigorous pre-election procedure.

- The Board moved to approve the property modification request of 158 Chippenham Court.
- The Society Hill at Piscataway Board of Trustees also met on Monday, December 16th, 2013 at 7:00PM for its monthly meeting. The following are highlights from that meeting:
- Management presented a more detailed election procedure to the Board, which will be amended and incorporated into a resolution to be presented at the January meeting.
 - The Board authorized management to purchase 10,000 forever stamps.

- The Board moved to accept the renewal proposal from Philadelphia Insurance for the Association's master insurance policy if no other proposals were available or could be voted on by December 23rd.
- The Board moved to accept the 2014 Budget as proposed by the Finance Committee with amendments to two line items.

The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 20th 2014 at 7:00PM at the clubhouse. All residents and non-resident owners are welcome to attend.

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

Board of Trustees

Kevin Wine—2014
President

345 Lancaster Court

Atif Nazir—2016
Vice President

541 Manchester Court

Greg Machyowsky—2016

Treasurer/Secretary
448 Lancaster Court

Doug Sanford—2015

Trustee-at-Large
44 Canterbury Court

Carlyle Chan—2015

Trustee-at-Large
30 Canterbury Court

Zahid Khan—2013

Trustee-at-Large
158 Chippenham Court

George Tsacnaris—2015

Trustee-at-Large
171 Chippenham Court

**2014 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

Editorial—Affordable Housing and Society Hill

The matter of Affordable Housing, sometimes referenced as "Mt. Laurel", is a topic that has received some discussion at Board Meetings during 2013 and was written about in the November Newsletter. None of us know how this situation will ultimately be resolved; the nature of our society is that - my wise prediction - some parties will be happy with the resolution and other parties will be unhappy.

Unfortunately, governing bodies on the local, state, and federal levels do change regulations on a regular basis. It is very hard to say something is "forever". It is only forever until somebody with authority changes it. We all make the best plans we can but being flexible is almost a requirement.

So - Affordable Housing. We have it now in Society Hill, and it may or may not continue to exist in the future. I have my own opinion on Affordable Housing as a concept, though I'm not sure it is relevant to the community at

large. Anyone that wants to discuss this with me, feel free. As a Board of Trustees member, I am not clear what stake our Board and our Association has in any decision on the future of the program within the community. Is this an issue that the Association should wade into, or should it be left to individuals? I do encourage individuals to contact their elected representatives such as our Mayor and our Councilperson. You should share your view. That is always appropriate.

As far as potential revenue increase for the Association should the Affordable Housing program no longer exist in Society Hill (which was mentioned in the November Newsletter) I have a different opinion. Right now I would propose we equalize all the unit fees to maintain our current revenue, which means that instead of paying \$165 per month (Regular Unit fee)

everyone would pay \$144 per month. That gives us the same amount of total fees. I am not looking to the end of Affordable Housing, if that is the outcome, as a method to raise a lot of extra money.

So the 439 owners of Regular units would each see a fee DECREASE of \$21 per month, and the Association still gets the same revenue to support all its expenses. Or, maybe we go with \$149 per month and have a small amount (\$35,000) of extra money each year to spend to improve the community. I know this community has many hard-working families of modest means who would appreciate a fee reduction while receiving the same level of service, as would owners who rent out their units.

I have not made a final decision on this and will consider very carefully all the aspects at the time a decision needs to be made, if that occurs while I am still serving on the Board of Trustees.

- George Tsacnaris, Trustee

President's Message (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)
for almost as long as the pond renovation is the maintenance garage. Several parties are either involved in or have inserted their fingers in this project which is making it challenging to come up with a design that satisfies all of them. In preliminary meetings with the town over the last few years, there is concern over the size, height, use, location, and contents of the struc-

ture. Satisfying all the concerns may seriously degrade the usefulness of the facility. As variances are required, approval depends on review by the town planning or zoning board, the outcome of which seems to have some unpredictability. Since it costs money to generate design documents and apply, the idea is to present a design with the greatest chance of approval. However, as we

are the ones that will be using the facility, it has to meet our requirements as well, and at some point very soon I will have to take back control of this project and roll the dice. Clean up of the clubhouse parking lot and surroundings, clean up of the clubhouse itself, removal of the shipping container on Chesterfield, clean up of the Hampshire Ct. parking lot, resurfacing of Hampshire Ct., renovation of the condominium building steps, repair of the water meter pits, mass production of the pigeon nets, the community internet project, the TV project, the video security system, efficient execution of the re-roofing project, the general efficiency and organization of our operations, and my sanity, all hinge on construction of the maintenance garage.

To be continued next month...
Happy Holidays!

- Kevin Wine, President



Owned And Operated By NRT LLC.

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