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MewsNEWS

*The Newsletter for
Fairlington Mews
Residents
Volume 2008 Issue 6
November Extra*



Extra Edition Message from the Board

Dear Mews Owners and Residents,

Special Board Presentation

The November 20th Board of Directors meeting will begin at 6:30 PM rather than the usual time of 7:00 PM to include a special presentation.

Mr. Peter Philbin, association counsel from Rees Broome (PC), will conduct an “educational” seminar to update the board on recent and on going legal issues facing condominium associations. Whereas this presentation is designed primarily for board members and committee chairs, involved co-owners are encouraged to attend.

Depending on the length of Mr. Philbin’s presentation, a brief question and answer session will follow before the beginning of the regularly scheduled business meeting. Questions relating to community-wide legal concerns may be sent to association president Tami Anderson in advance of this meeting for possible inclusion in the presentation.

Sidewalk Repairs

The Board of Directors approved on October 23, 2008 a contract with Colonial Paving and Concrete Company (45150 Broadlands Center Plaza, Ashburn, VA 20148) for needed concrete repair/ replacement at a total cost of \$23,459.00.

Hopefully sidewalk work will begin this fall as the weather permits with completion of the project in spring 2009.

One of the conditions of the two year warranty of the contract is that only non-chemical sand will be used on the sidewalks during snow and icy conditions. (Information obtained from Colonial Paving and Concrete Company.) Somerset Landscape, association snow removal

contractor, has been informed of this contractual obligation.

It is also imperative that residents not apply any caustic chemicals or ice melts to sidewalks and front stoops since these chemicals damage stoop mortar and the concrete surface of the sidewalks causing peeling and scaling thus exposing the aggregate surface.

Please do not apply any chemical ice melt products to the sidewalks or front stoops.

Taking Precautions

If you are away for an extended time, please give your neighbor a spare set of keys to your residence and your vehicle to ensure that someone monitors your home to see that no problems, such as water leakage or broken pipes, occur. Your neighbor can move your vehicle should an emergency arise. Planned sidewalk repairs may necessitate moving cars periodically.

Financial Report

At the October Board of Directors meeting, Mr. John Fell, association financial advisor from Morgan Stanley, presented an overview of association investments and current financial status. Highlights of his presentation included:

- Total asset value as of August 31, 2008 was \$1,134,612.53.
- Certificates of Deposit are invested in different US banks.
- Average interest earning of association portfolio is 4.5%.
- Recent Congressional legislation insures accounts up to \$250,000.00. No Mews account in any bank is more than the insured allowance.

- Certificates of Deposit pay double the interest of Treasury Bills.
- There is no negativity to association accounts as a result of the ongoing financial situation.
- Association accounts upon maturity are reinvested or cashed out depending on the recommendation of management/ board.

One association CD matures on October 27, 2008 with another on January 8, 2009

Lower Your Electric Bill

To reduce your electric bill and to become more energy efficient, follow these simple steps:

1. Check your furnace/ AC filter monthly and clean or replace it as needed. A dirty filter hinders air circulation within the system increasing your energy bill and damaging your equipment.
2. Shorten your shower time – you're clean in five minutes – and remember showers take less water than baths.
3. Make sure your dish washer and clothes washer have a full load before beginning the wash cycle.
4. Lower the temperature on your hot water heater. Set at "warm" so the temperature of running water is 130 degrees. Remember about 15% of an average electric bill goes to heating water.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Question:** *Recently I "heard" that there may be asbestos in some interior original elements. Is this true?*

Answer: Original lower level tiles and the "popcorn" ceilings may contain asbestos. During the conversion in the seventies, it is understood (from long-term Fairlington residents) that the use of products possibly containing asbestos ended when Fairlington Glen was converted from rental units to condominiums. The Mews was the last conversion on south side, so the presence of unsafe elements is unlikely.

Any presence of asbestos is not a problem unless disturbed when it then becomes "friable" or set free in the air. Contractors can test for the presence of asbestos.

One Fairlington resident advises that rather than removing the questionable popcorn ceiling, an owner can contain it by placing quarter inch drywall over it.

Remember interior features are the responsibility of the homeowner.

2. **Question:** *Due to the fragile nature of our pipes and drainage, are there precautions I should take in what I put in my disposal and toilets?*

Answer: Yes! The following items should not be placed in your toilet or disposal:

- a. Egg shells
- b. Grease
- c. Large amounts of rice/ pasta
- d. Stringy vegetables, such as celery and corn husks
- e. Vegetable peelings
- f. Sanitary items
- g. Disposable diapers
- h. Paper towels
- i. Kleenex
- j. Toilet paper treated with moisturizers
- k. Dental floss
- l. Cat litter
- m. Pet or human hair
- n. Cigarette butts
- o. Contraceptives

3. **Question:** *Is it an association or homeowner responsibility to unclog a kitchen drain?*

Answer: It is a homeowner's responsibility. Most townhouses share a common kitchen sink drain; in other words, both drains from the disposals connect in a common, single pipe leading from the units. Unclogging any shared drain is a shared expense of both co-owners.

4. **Question:** *What should I do about mice or other pests and rodents inside my unit?*

Answer: Generally rodents or other pests are the homeowner's responsibility. Make certain that all openings such as dryer vents, windows, doors or openings around the AC and/ or heat pump conduits are tightly caulked to prevent entrance through these openings. Bird feeders attract mice and chipmunks.

Do not feed the wildlife! Overgrown and weedy patio areas make good winter homes for "critters"! Keep your patio clean and eliminate storage items and overgrown plants that might harbor rodents or other pests.

5. **Question:** *What can I use to keep my drains running freely?*

Answer: Purchase an enzyme drain cleaner (available at Home Depot, Lowes, or other home centers) such as Zep and use monthly in sinks, tubs, etc. following the product's directions. Do not use any caustic cleaner such as Drano as this damages the pipes and drains?

6. **Question:** *I understand that Arlington County is very particular about building permits. What interior work requires a county permit?*

Answer: The following county permits are applicable to interior work:

- a. **Building Permit** – “All structural work requires a permit from Inspection Services Division except...construction of a patio slab, {or} residential cabinets...”
- b. **Electrical Permit** – “All electrical work requires a permit from the Inspection Services Division except minor repair work which includes only the following: replacing switches, sockets, and receptacles; repairing lighting fixtures; repairing appliances; repairing heating equipment and air conditioning equipment.”
- c. **Plumbing Permit** – “All new plumbing requires a permit...except minor repair which includes only the following: repairs involving only the working parts of a valve or faucet; the clearance of stoppages; repairs of leaks or replacement of defective valves or faucets, provided no changes are made in the piping to the fixture or appliance.”
- d. **Mechanical Permit** – “A permit is required for the installation, or alteration of...furnaces, air conditioning systems, ventilation, exhaust systems. A survey plat showing the location of all outdoor new and replacement heat pumps or A/C units is required.”
- e. **When in doubt about a permit, call the county.**

(Above information from Arlington County web site “When is a permit required?” Community Planning Housing Department)

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/isd/CPHDIsdPermitRequired.aspx>

7. **Question:** *What do I do after I obtain a county permit for construction work?*

Answer: The county will issue you an 8 ½ x 11 permit which you should retain in your records. It will also issue an 8 ½ x 14 red/ white public permit notice which you should post in your window during construction.

8. **Question:** *When does the Mews Association require a variance for interior remodeling work?*

Answer: Generally changing any interior structural element, such as removing/ adding a wall or completing an attic conversion, requires a variance.

You should submit an architect or engineer’s plans for such work to the board when you seek a variance. The board may ask you to provide evidence of proper county permits. The board may not act immediately on your variance request, so please plan well in advance before beginning your construction. Again, when in doubt about the need for a variance, contact the Board of Directors.

9. **Question:** *How do I know if the contractor I have hired is licensed by the county?*

Answer: Arlington County issues a business license to all contractors who work within the county. This is in addition to a Virginia business license. Ask to see proof of such licensing before signing the contract! Reliable contractors know Arlington County’s code/ permit systems and will help you in securing the proper permits.

10. **Question:** *My contractor wants to place a dumpster or construction trailer on the street during my remodeling. Is this acceptable?*

Answer: All dumpsters or construction trailers parked on Arlington public streets must have a county permit to be placed in public parking spaces.

11. **Question:** *Sometimes I have a “peculiar” odor, much like sewer gas, in my lower level. How do I prevent this smell?*

Answer: Floor drains in the lower level bathroom and utility closet (if your unit has one) must be kept “wet”; that means they need to be filled with water to prevent sewer gas. Regularly make sure the drains are “watered”; you may also use a weak Clorox and water solution in the drain to keep it “fresh”.

During recent sewer relining work in Court 11, the lower level floor drains went “dry” releasing sewer gas in the units. Refilling the drains with water quickly ended the problem.

12. **Question:** *When I purchased my unit, there was a large tree/ shrub in the patio. Now the association tells me I need to prune or remove the plant so that it does not damage the roof, gutters, masonry, or wood trim. Is this my responsibility?*

Answer: Patios are a “limited commons area” and are the responsibility of the homeowner. Existing plant materials in the patio area at purchase are the responsibility of the new owner. Yes, the association has the responsibility to ask you to remove at your expense any material that is deemed as damaging the structure. Failure to comply with the association’s request may mean that the association will remove the

material and charge the removal to the owner. The association has the right to enter your patio to make necessary repairs to fences or other structural elements.

13. Question: Recently the Virginia Department of Health issued a warning about possible lead based paint in houses constructed before 1978.

What is this all about?

Answer: Common renovation activities can create hazardous lead dust and chips by disturbing lead-based paint that may be found in buildings

constructed prior to 1978. Effective December 22, 2008, all persons performing renovation for compensation in pre 1978 housing must provide the **Renovate Right** pamphlet to all owners and occupants before beginning renovation. To learn more about the Renovation, Repair, and Painting rule call the Environmental Protection Agency at 1-800-424-LEAD or visit

<http://www.epa.gov/lead/>

MewsNEWS

This newsletter is published bimonthly by the Fairlington Mews Bard of Directors for owners and residents in Fairlington Mews. Suggested articles, comments, or items of interest from residents are always welcome. Please send to: tormrcor@aol.com

Editors: Tom Corbin/Ron Patterson, 4624 S. 34th Street, Phone: (703) 931-0687 - Subscribe to the MewsNEWS - send us your email address at mewsnewsletter@aol.com - newsletter in Word or PDF format sent as attachment to email

Fairlington Web Site: www.fairlington.org/mewsindex.htm Webmaster: Ron Patterson, Phone: (703) 931-0687

Meeting Calendar/Contacts

Board Meetings Board Meetings are scheduled for November 20, December 18, and January 22 @ 7:00 pm at the South Fairlington Community Center

| | <u>Address</u> | <u>Phone</u> |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Board of Directors | | |
| President | Tami Anderson tamiande@hotmail.com | (703) 820-5665 |
| Vice President | Seth Low lowseth@earthlink.net | (703) 379-0155 |
| 2 nd Vice President | Ron Patterson ronaldp755@verizon.net | (703) 931-0687 |
| Treasurer | Julie Claypool jbclaypool@verizon.net | (703) 931-9161 |
| Secretary | Tom Corbin tomrcor@aol.com | (703) 931-0687 |

Committee Chairs

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Landscape | Lori Olivas | 4666-A S. 36 th Street | (703) 379-4927 |
| Recreation | Ann Timmons | 4638 S. 34 th Street | (703) 820-9589 |
| | David Biette | 4638 S. 34 th Street | (703) 820-9589 |
| Newsletter | Tom Corbin/Ron Patterson | 4624 S. 34 th Street | (703) 931-0687 |
| Carriage Lamps | Janice & Larry Peters | 4605 S. 36 th Street | (703) 578-4992 |

Court Representatives

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. 3600-3616 S. Wakefield | Tom Roberts | 3616 S. Wakefield Street | (703) 820-1992 |
| 2. 4606-4630 S. 36 th | Ben Marglin | 4608 S. 36 th Street | (703) 671-7281 |
| 3. 4632-4636 S. 36 th | Shannon Blair | 4632B S. 36 th Street | (703) 618-1813 |
| 4. 4638-4654 S. 36 th | Myrta & Ricardo Alonzo | 4646B S. 36 th Street | (703) 824-0631 |
| 5. 4656-4674 S. 36 th | Renee Powlette | 4670B 36 th Street | (703) 671-2774 |
| 6. 4676-4698 S. 36 th | Fern Birtwistle | 4678B S. 36 th Street | (703) 379-7354 |
| 7. 4667-4671 S. 36 th | Gordon Whyte | 4667A S. 36 th Street | (703) 578-4564 |
| 8. 4664-4686 S. 34 th | Gretchen Martin | 4680 S. 34 th Street | (703) 933-1368 |
| 9. 4624-4658 S. 34 th | David Biette | 4638 S. 34 th Street | (703) 820-9589 |
| 10. 4600-4618 S. 34 th | Shirley Fein | 4610 S. 34 th Street | (703) 553-0340 |
| | Shana Chase | 4612 S. 34 th Street | (703) 931-0776 |
| 11. 3408-3458 S. Wakefield | Chandra Burnside | 3432 S. Wakefield Street A2 | (703) 379-1082 |
| 12. 3500-3544 S. Wakefield | Victoria Lipnik | 3512 S. Wakefield Street | (703) 379-7160 |
| 13. 4601-4611 S. 36 th | Joanne Herman | 4603B S. 36 th Street | (703) 931-5867 |
| 14. 4615-4637 S. 36 th | Craig Wagner | 4631 S. 36 th Street | (703) 931-7549 |
| 15. 4641-4665 S. 36 th | Gordon Avery | 4655 S. 36 th Street | (703) 820-3134 |

Additional Important Numbers

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|
| Sewer Back-up | Dwyer Plumbing | (703) 922-8220 |
| Trash Collection | CAPITOL SERVICES OF VIRGINIA, INC. | (703) 998-5860 |
| Large Articles of Trash | Put out at CURBSIDE on the 1st Saturday of the month or call CAPITOL SERVICES for pick-up at your expense | (703) 998-5860 |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| Management Agent | Community Management Corporation 12701 Fair Lakes Circle, Suite 400 Fairfax, VA 22033 Jason Eglin JEglin@cmc-management.com | (703) 631-7200 Fax: 703-631-9786 (703) 631-7200, ext. 212 |
| Swimming Pool | | (703) 379-POOL |

24 Hour Maintenance Call-In Community Management Corporation (703) 631 – 7200

EMERGENCY NUMBER (703) 631 – 7200 FAIRLINGTON MEWS