
Fairlington Commons

Newsletter

3367 S. Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22206 August 2009

Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Election

The annual meeting of the Fairlington Commons Council of Co-Owners will be held Tuesday, October 13th in Room 134 of the Fairlington Community Center located at 3308 S. Stafford Street, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting will be to elect board members and to discuss topics of interest.

Two seats on the Board of Directors, currently held by Christine Sivigny and Bernie Weaver, are up for election. Both Christine and Bernie have indicated that they do not plan to run for re-election. We will need to elect two members of the Council of Co-Owners to serve on the Board of Directors.

Anyone interested in serving on the Board should notify Secretary Bernie Weaver or President John Sinks by email, telephone, or by a note in the pool mailbox at 3367 S. Wakefield Street no later than Friday, September 18, 2009 to be listed on the proxy ballot.

Board Members are elected by Co-Owner votes submitted by proxy or at the meeting. Following the election, the Board reconstitutes itself, selecting officers from within as mandated by our By-Laws. You must be a Co-Owner to serve on the Board.

For additional information about responsibilities and time commitments, please contact a Board member with your questions. Formal meeting notification and proxy ballots will be mailed to all Co-Owners in the near future.

For planning purposes – our Budget Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2009, also in Room 134 at the Community Center.

Pool News

The pool will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. through Labor Day Monday, September 7th. The pool will close at 6:00 p.m. Labor Day Monday. The pool will also be open Tuesday, September 8th through Friday September 11th from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday, September 12th and 13th from 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. The last day of swimming for the 2009 pool season will be Sunday, September 13th.

End of Summer Pool Party – Saturday, September 12th beginning at 6:00 p.m. As in past years, we will provide the hotdogs, hamburgers, soft drinks, and condiments, and ask each family attending to bring a dish to share. The rain date is the afternoon of Sunday, September 13th beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Doggie Dip – our Pool “goes to the dogs” on Sunday, September 13th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. after which it is closed for the season. If we have to move our End of Summer Party to this date because of rain, we will start the Doggie Dip a bit later.

Underpinning

Over the past several weeks, work has been ongoing to underpin one of our units located at 3336B South Wakefield Street. That work is now complete. Work will soon commence on a second unit, located at 3318B South Wakefield Street. Both of these units are located on the lower path between South Wakefield Street and the woods above I-395 and have exhibited signs of shifting within the last year.

The necessity to underpin can derive from several causes. In the two previous instances, the concrete footers had been poured over loose fill dirt when the units were originally constructed in the 1940s. With time and dry soil conditions, the loose fill had compacted, resulting in the foundations of the two buildings settling. This is the most prevalent cause for underpinning of units in Fairlington Commons. Several adjoining Condominium associations have also found it necessary to underpin units, either due to settling or movement caused by the expansion and contraction of the underlying clay as it became wet or dried out in the summer heat.

While some cracking of paint and plaster is to be expected in structures from the 1940s, the need to underpin is usually indicated by more significant cracking and separation in interior walls and in exterior brickwork and or by windows and doors that are no longer plumb or square. In any instance, reports of potential settling are carefully evaluated prior to action being taken, most often by visual inspection, exploratory digging, or through the use of instrumentation.

While this may sound complicated, the actual underpinning process is quite simple; the foundation is excavated to the footer, steel pins

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

of 20 to 30 feet length are screwed into the ground adjacent the footer, and the footer is then jacked up and secured to the pins by a large steel clamps to return the building to its proper elevation and to preclude further movement. Once underpinning is complete, any landscaping or sidewalks removed in the process are replaced and the area is restored to its original condition.

Doggonit!

Dogs bark. It is in their nature. But a dog that barks constantly, night after night, generating multiple complaints to Animal Control, the Police, and to the Board of Directors, as one did this summer, is in very real danger of removal from the Commons. Our By-Laws, Article VI, Section 6, Paragraph (i) state in part that, "If a dog or other animal becomes obnoxious to other co-owners by barking or otherwise, the co-owner thereof must cause the problem to be corrected or if it is not corrected, by co-owner, upon written notice by the Board of Directors, will be required to dispose of the animal."

And then there is something else that dogs "do" that was cause for concern in a recent note from a Co-Owner to the Board:

"... Someone is letting their dog regularly poop in the grassy area next to the woods beside 3304 - 3306 Wakefield without picking it up. It's getting quite disgusting. Neighbors who live further down the path have also complained but since we don't know who it is we cannot address it directly."

Not only is this a violation of the By-Laws of Fairlington Commons (Article VI, Section 4. Use of General Common Elements), it is also a violation of the Arlington County Code, Chapter 2, Article II, §2-5, paragraph (b) which states "The owner of a dog shall be responsible for the removal of the dog's excretion from any property other than the dog owner's property

and between the edges or curbs of public streets.”

We do not know if the guilty party is a resident of the Commons, or just someone passing through. And, we appreciate that a large majority of dog owners within Fairlington Commons are courteous of their neighbors (human and canine). However, we recommend that if you see somebody not picking up after their dog, please remind them of the need to adhere to both the Arlington County Code as well as the By-Laws of Fairlington Commons. You can also report them to the Arlington County Police Department, as well as the Board and/or Commons Service Coordinator.

To the Co-Owner who asked we send a note to everyone asking for their immediate cooperation - consider the note sent! Dog owners, please be considerate of your neighbors and pick up after your pets!

Great American Bake Sale Sets Record!

Held Saturday, July 4th in conjunction with the Fairlington Villages/FCA 4^h of July Parade, this year’s “Great American Bake Sale” raised an all-time record of \$1,210 for “Share Our Strength,” a non-profit organization dedicated toward ending childhood hunger in America. This was the seventh consecutive year that The Commons has sponsored “The Great American Bake Sale,” and the credit for its success goes to Commons resident and event coordinator Cathy Malin.

This year’s event exceeded the amount raised by any previous sale, a success credited by Cathy to the fantastic weather, superb efforts by all who donated baked goods, and the generosity of the many patrons who made purchases and donations. Thanks also go to the Panera Bread

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

Company, Diversions Cards and Gifts, Great Harvest Bread Company, One Two Kangaroo, One Good Tern, Reunions, Pro Feed, Unwined, Fairlington Pizza, Robcyns, Ho Chinese Carryout, and to Safeway, Giant, and Harris Teeter for donations of Gift Cards and to Trader Joe’s for donation of a Gift Bag.

Staying Informed

As a reminder - many Fairlington Commons documents are available on the Web at:

<http://www.fairlington.org/commonsindex.htm>

Included on the web site are current and past issues of this newsletter, notices of upcoming meetings (dates, start times, agendas), meeting minutes, our By-Laws, Capital Replacement Study, instructions for obtaining Condominium Disclosure Documents, our Parking Policy, Parking Pass application form, and other documents.

Blue Tape

During the 2009 painting season, the contractor placed blue tape on any woodwork that required repair or replacement. Due to delays in accomplishing those repairs and the unsightly nature of the tape, some residents elected to remove the tape before repairs could be accomplished.

If you are one of those residents who removed the tape, please contact Commons Service Coordinator Eric Pamer at 703-379-0027 or by email at the address provided at the bottom of the page with your unit number and the location that had been previously marked by the tape so that the necessary repairs can be accomplished.

Parking Enforcement Changes Coming

Due to an increasing number of complaints from Co-Owners regarding violations of our parking policy, an increase in the number of cars parked in our parking lots, and the commensurate increase in the amount of time necessary to respond to each complaint, the Board of Directors is considering significant changes in parking enforcement.

Our parking policy is very simple. With a few minor exceptions, any vehicle parked in one of our parking lots must display a Fairlington Commons hangtag **on the rearview mirror** or be subject to towing at the owner's expense.

Previously, vehicles without hangtags have been towed only after several reminder notices have been issued, and then only after Board authorization. Due to the number of violations, the Board is considering authorizing the towing company to actively patrol our parking lots and to remove any vehicle parked without a hangtag. Also under consideration is allowing residents to call the towing company to request that a violator be towed when they observe parking violations.

A review of our parking lot signs indicates that they meet the current Arlington County Code, which changed in May, with the exception that we will have to add the Arlington County Police telephone number. Once this is accomplished, our signs will again meet County Code.

With regard to hangtags - no more than two hangtags will be issued to a single unit. If you have previously been issued two hangtags and have lost one or both, replacements may be obtained at a cost of \$25 each. The Commons has a complete list of every hangtag issued.

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

Any vehicle displaying a hangtag that has been reported lost will be immediately towed.

If you have a hangtag that has become unserviceable (**it can no longer be hung on the rearview mirror**), you may trade that hangtag for a new one at no cost. Requests for replacement hangtags should be directed to Board member Bernie Weaver. You will be required to surrender your old hangtag concurrent with receiving the new one. Our parking policy is posted at on the web at: <http://www.fairlington.org/CommonsParkingPolicy.pdf>.

Applications for parking passes can be found at: <http://www.fairlington.org/CommonsParkingPassApplication.pdf>

Tree Service

Recently several trees died in the Commons, requiring removal. The Commons solicited proposals from six tree service companies. We requested prices for more work than we plan to have done at the present time, including tree pruning, in order to get a good gauge of prices.

Five companies responded to the request. The reference checks were all favorable and all companies employ a certified arborist. Therefore, the Board's decision was based on cost. The Board decided to split the work between AAA Tree Service, which offered the best price for the removal of "large to very large trees", and G&V Tree Service, which offered the best price for the removal of "medium" trees. The proposed estimates for the planned work proved well within the budget for trees and shrubs.

The Commons also retained the services of an independent arborist regarding a large oak tree on 34th Street that was struck by lightning 15 or

20 years ago. Most of the wound healed, but the tree has been slowly rotting at the base since that time. The arborist advised us that it is impossible to predict when a large tree is ready to fall, but the tree in question shows no sign of falling soon. He recommended the tree be sprayed for carpenter ants, the base sealed with foam, and the crown thinned by pruning so there would be less resistance to wind. He also recommended that the ivy around the base of the tree be removed and replaced with mulch so the ground holding the roots will not be so soft. The Commons will undertake the work at the base of the tree in the near future, but will wait until late winter, the appropriate season, for the pruning.

As of the writing of this newsletter, G&V has removed the one pine and one hemlock on S. Utah Street and a pair of cherry trees on S. 34th Street. AAA has removed the elm tree on S. 34th Street.

Disclosure Papers and Insurance Certificates

The Virginia Condominium Act requires sellers to present a package of information to a prospective buyer. This package of information is referred to as Disclosure Papers. To obtain Disclosure Papers for Fairlington Commons, please contact Murphy and Associates at (703) 370-9100. The cost for the Disclosure Papers is \$100. Before they are issued, a unit is inspected so we can answer the question of whether the unit conforms to the rules of the association. When requesting Disclosure Papers, please provide contact information so we can schedule the inspection. Questionnaires from lenders for refinancing, appraisers, and settlement attorneys about the status of payments should also be directed to Murphy and Associates.

Fairlington Commons Newsletter

Lenders usually require Certificates of Insurance. These should be requested from our insurance agent, Jerry Wagner, who can be reached at (703) 631-2882 BY THE LENDER, not by the buyer, seller, or real estate agent.

Mouse in the House

When Ward's Pest Control treated a rat-hole recently, the Co-Owner asked about an interior mouse problem. In general, the Commons does not assume responsibility for mice in a single unit. The exterminator observed that the mortar around the air conditioning line had deteriorated, creating a very small opening. That was sufficient for a mouse to enter and leave the unit. A spot check of several other air conditioning lines, which are co-owner responsibility, revealed that this was not a unique case. We recommend that you check where your line enters your unit and patch, if necessary.

Trash

If you've lived in the Commons for a while, you can probably recite from memory our Trash and Recycling Pickup schedule, but for our new residents, and as a reminder for everyone:

- **Trash is collected on Tuesday and Friday mornings**
- **Recycling is collected on Thursday mornings.**
- **Paint Cans are not accepted as Trash or Recycling**

To ensure pickup, trash and recycling must be at the curb or designated pickup point no later than 7:00 a.m. the morning of pickup. **Residents may place trash and recycling at designated**

pickup points no sooner than dark the previous evening.

A few of our residents have been placing their trash out for pickup as early as the afternoon prior to the pickup day. **Please do not do this.** The last thing that the rest of us, visitors to our community, and prospective homebuyers want to see is your trash littering our community.

The Commons has previously dealt informally with most violations of our trash and recycling policies, although in a few cases Arlington County’s Police and Health Departments have been notified.

Storm Drain Work

O ver this past summer, Arlington County Public Works crews have been actively engaged in resolving a number of issues within the Commons related to sewers and storm drains. One of the more prevalent issues was the storm drain at 3300 South Wakefield Street that often produced spectacular waterfalls rivaling Niagara Falls during periods of heavy or prolonged rains. Based on the following email to Commons President John Sinks from Mary Strawn of Arlington County, that problem may be resolved. The text of that email follows:

“Mr. Sinks:

I wanted to provide you with an update on the work performed in the 3300 block of S. Wakefield.

As you know, earlier this summer we cleaned out the catch basin in the street in front of 3300 S. Wakefield and inspected the structure to determine the direction of the flow and the soundness of the piping. We found that the pipe leading from the catch basin towards the sidewalk was in poor condition.

Based on this information and the fact that we had no recorded easements for the storm sewer running between 3300 and 3301 S. Wakefield, we decided to reroute the flow from this catch basin to the storm water manhole in the street in front of 3300. Now, rather than sending the flow down the hill in the pipe between 3300 and 3301, the flow enters our system in the street. This work was completed in July.

I believe this should solve the issue you've been having with storm water overtopping the curb and running down the hill. If you or some of your neighbors can keep an eye on it and let me know if you see any issues, I'd appreciate it.

***Thanks,
Mary”***

Stolen Plants

A pproximately 30 pachysandra recently planted adjacent the electric box in the 3300 Block of S. Utah Street to help control erosion have been stolen. Anyone with information regarding who removed the plants is asked to contact the Board. A report has been filed with Arlington County Police.

Fairlington Commons Board of Directors		
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