
Fairlington Commons Newsletter

3367 S. Wakefield Street, Arlington, VA 22206

January 2007

2007 Budget Approved

On Thursday, December 7th, the Fairlington Commons Council of Co-Owners Budget Meeting was held in the Cafeteria of the Abingdon Elementary School at 3035 South Abingdon Street. The purpose of the meeting was to review and vote on the 2007 Budget developed and submitted to the Co-Owners by the Board of Directors.

Commons Council of Co-Owners President John Sinks called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. with a quorum of 38% of the Co-Owners represented in person or by proxy. The budget was presented, questions answered, and ballots cast, with the budget approved by a 10 to 1 margin. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Winter is Here?

Assuming that it will actually become cold at some point, and if you haven't already done so – please take the following steps to prevent burst pipes and flooded basements:

- **Disconnect all garden hoses!**
- **Turn off faucet shutoff valves!**
(generally located under kitchen sinks for rear faucets and inside a hatch in the basement ceiling for front faucets – but they can also be in other locations as well)
- **Open faucets to allow trapped water to drain!**

Auto Theft and Vandalism Follow-Up

Corporal Scott Whalin of the Arlington County Police Department recently visited our neighborhood in response to concerns raised by residents regarding thefts of items from vehicles and attempted vehicle thefts. As a result, Arlington County Police have promised to increase patrols in The Commons during nighttime hours.

While increased patrols may deter some vehicle related crime, please remember that the primary line of defense remains resident vigilance. We said this in our last newsletter, but it's worth repeating:

- Lock your Car!
- Do not leave valuables in plain view!
- If you see someone looking in parked cars – **call Arlington County Police immediately at 911!**
- Assume nothing –err on the side of caution. It is far better for someone with a legitimate purpose to have to explain to police than to provide thieves the opportunity to steal.
- Car theft and stealing items from cars is a 24-hour occupation, not restricted to the hours of darkness!

Christmas Tree Pickup

Wednesdays, January 3rd and January 10th
Please remove all lights, tinsel, and decorations prior to placing your tree curbside for pickup.

Some Budget Thoughts

Planning next year's budget is never easy, and while expenditures are strictly controlled, we are inevitably faced with rising costs driven by energy, materials, and inflation. Some of those costs are directly incurred (water, sewer, electricity), some are passed to us through our contractors (who are also subject to employee benefit and medical costs), and some result from the aging of our World War II era buildings and infrastructure (sewer lines and retaining walls).

In voting on the proposed budget, one Co-Owner wrote a note on their proxy expressing concern that, at some point, our condominium fees would impact unit sales. While fees are certainly a consideration in planning a budget and a factor in a prospective buyer's purchase decision, our 2007 fees fall squarely in the middle of those of our Fairlington neighbors. With mid-range fees, aesthetically pleasing grounds, and recreational facilities second to none, Fairlington Commons remains both a good community in which to live and a solid competitor for the real estate purchaser's dollars.

Another Co-Owner wrote a note on their proxy inquiring about our "Budget Slush Fund." Well, the truth is, we have never had a "Budget Slush Fund." What we do have are reserve funds specifically targeted to pay contingencies and capital improvements not handled in the annual budget. We also can transfer unused operating funds (snow removal leftovers) to cover unforeseen costs or to complement reserves. And the term "Reserve" means just that; most of our painting, roofing, and paving expenses are anticipated, budgeted, and paid from operating funds without utilizing reserves.

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Past Boards, admirably, have attempted to hold the line against condominium fee increases while maintaining our buildings and infrastructure to the high standards that we enjoy today. Unfortunately, energy and materials costs, inflation, and damages from three back-to-back occurrences (2004's Hurricane Ivan, underpinning several buildings in 2005-2006, and the unprecedented rains of June 2006 - 14 inches in three days - \$100,000 in damage - 1/6th of our 2006 budget) stretched our ability to meet expenses without utilizing reserves, money that we must now repay to ensure our ability to meet future capital improvements and contingencies.

On Thursday, December 7th, the Co-Owners of Fairlington Commons approved a 2007 budget of approximately three-quarters of a million dollars, a budget that will allow us to operate our community, conduct essential maintenance, and begin replenishment of our reserves.

Roofing

Roof replacements originally planned for early fall but delayed by slate availability have been completed at 4659 - 4661 S. 34th Street and 3347 S. Wakefield Street. Extensive maintenance was completed on roofs at 3329 S. Wakefield and 4415-25 and 4437-47 South 34th Streets last spring - with proper care; these roofs have a long life expectancy.

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