

**Fairlington Mews Council of Co-owners  
Board of Directors Meeting September 26, 2006  
South Fairlington Community Center  
Minutes**

**Call to Order/ Attendance/ Quorum**

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM by president Fern Birtwistle. Quorum established.

In attendance were board members Seth Low and Julia Claypool in addition to Ms. Birtwistle. Manager Steve Navar was present.

Committee personnel in attendance were Lori Olivas and Penny Glass of the Landscape Committee.

Residents and visitors attending were the following:

- |                   |  |                   |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1. Renee Powlette | 4670 B S. 36 <sup>th</sup> St.             |                   |
| 2. Tom O'Brien    | 3422 S. Wakefield St.                      |                   |
| 3. Sue Montgomery | 3078 S. Abingdon St. B 1                   | North Fairlington |
| 4. Debbie Marson  | 4815 S. 31 <sup>st</sup> St. A 1           | North Fairlington |
| 5. Tami Anderson  | 4625 S. 36 <sup>th</sup> St. A-1           |                   |
| 6. Gordon Avery   | 4655 S. 36 <sup>th</sup> St. B-2, A-2, A-1 |                   |
| 7. Sharon Webster | 3520 S. Wakefield St.                      |                   |
| 8. Tom Corbin     | 4624 S. 34 <sup>th</sup> St.               |                   |

Ms. Birtwistle informed the board and residents that Tom Corbin had volunteered to record the minutes of this meeting.

**Homeowners' Forum**

1. Resident (Court 5) was concerned about the lack of follow up to the June flood damage to her unit which she had reported earlier and at the July board meeting. She mentioned that North Fairlington was accepting liability for flood damage to its units. Her fear now is the growth of mold as her dehumidifier is filling up rapidly daily with water. She also felt that the gutters had not been properly attended to and cleaned. She also was concerned that only the gutters on her unit (and no others in her court) were replaced after the flooding, an admission of liability in her opinion.

Ms. Birtwistle's reply to her concerns consisted of the following: (1) there is little material behind the walls to promote the growth of mold; (2) the Mews by-laws state that water seepage through the foundation is not the association's responsibility; (3) the "unusual" severity of the storm and the amount of water produced could have clogged the gutters during the storm; (4) invoices from maintenance show that the gutters were cleaned on a regular basis, at least twice this spring; (5) she will check once again with Engleking about this particular situation.

2. Non-resident owner (Court 11) had water damage to his unit. He reported that the lower portion of the gutter was “wrinkled” and showed a dark stain above the bottom on the gutter indicating that water had overflowed the gutter before reaching the end of the pipe and had overflowed into the window wells.

Resident would like a written reply from Legum & Norman to his letter.

Ms Birtwistle’s reply consisted of the following: (1) if the tenants suspected that the gutters were malfunctioning, they should have reported it for repair; (2) again, the amount of rain which fell was “unusual” and could not have been foreseen in terms of potential damage; (3) a written reply will be sent.

3. Resident of North Fairlington reported that her leashed dog ate rat poison from the traps located near the Interstate 395 fence in the Mews “dog exercise area” on Labor Day week end. She contacted the L& N emergency number, but the manager on duty (Archie) did not know the nature of the traps or the kind of poison. (Manager Navar explained that L & N has a different manager each week “on call” for the emergency number and it is likely that the manager on duty did not know the situation.) Resident felt the traps should be marked as they are hazardous to children and pets, that the Mews should be liable for the vet bills incurred, that L & N’s management should have been more timely and cooperative in their response, and that the then “unknown” substance in the traps was an “attractive nuisance” to dogs and children.

Ms. Birtwistle replied that dog owners should be more attentive to the actions of their dogs. Mr. Navar responded that he had been in touch with Triple S, the contractor responsible for maintaining the poison traps, and that the company “may assume responsibility” for the vet bills and that he was awaiting a decision on this matter from Triple S. Resident will be informed of the decision.

4. Mews resident Tami Anderson volunteered to fill one of the vacant board positions. She has been an owner since 1982 and had been a member of a previous Mews budget committee.
5. Resident (Court 12) was present to follow up on her concern about the letter she received from the previous board regarding her newly installed flower bed and its potential to become overgrown if not cared for properly. She was also concerned about the “tree people” telling her of the danger of a potential lightning strike on the large elm tree near her unit and the possible resulting damage to her unit. She also questioned the decision making process of the Landscape Committee which she said consisted of only two people.

Ms. Birtwistle’s response consisted of (1) the board would look into the possibility of the installation of a lightning rod in the tree; (2) she indicated a desire to have more members on the Landscape Committee.

Lori Olivas also responded to resident by saying (1) the committee follows the recommendations of professionals hired to oversee the grounds and that the issue of the potential for overgrowth in resident's beds had been sited by the grounds contractor; (2) the Landscape Committee had reported in the March 2005 issue of the newsletter specific resident responsibilities regarding plantings and these had not been followed; (3) the newsletter encourages residents through the newsletter to become involved in the committee; (4) she had worked with resident in planning her bed, but her suggestions were ignored.

Julia Claypool said that the matter of bed maintenance becomes an association problem if the resident does not maintain the flower beds and that the board may remove questionable and non-maintained items and charge the resident.

Resident (Court 15) remarked that for a long time there was no Landscape Committee and the one of the past few years has done an excellent job in promoting, improving, and maintaining the Mews grounds.

### **President's Report**

Minutes of the July 25 meeting had been emailed to board members but the ones produced by Ms. Birtwistle were the incorrect ones. Ms. Claypool distributed the correct minutes but voting to approve the July minutes was delayed to the October meeting.

Ms. Birtwistle reported that since the last meeting she had studied the financial statements as presented in the Reserves Study and that the board/ management needed to make recommendations for needed repairs and to have a prioritized list of such repairs.

Ms. Birtwistle also announced that Julia Claypool was now the board treasurer.

The president's report also emphasized that the Mews rules were clear and needed to be followed by all residents. She had seen some progress in having the common areas of the apartment buildings cleared of personal items. A letter to apartment residents stating the rules regarding storage had been sent; several residents indicated that they had not complained previously about the improper storage of items in the common areas for "fear" of offending neighbors.

She recommended to Manager Steve Navar the need to (1) check on the regularity with which the hallway carpets were being cleaned; (2) the need to check the batteries in the smoke detectors/ fire alarms; (3) the need for "touch up" paint for the apartment doors; (4) the need for posting "no smoking" signs in the common hallways; and (5) the "nuisance" of the phone books left in the hallways.

A concern was raised about the need for more "specificity" in the invoices from Engle king; for example, there is great disparity in the invoices for fence and gate repairs. She recommended that the wood soffits which are subject to rot might be replaced by a "synthetic wood molded product". (The issue of whether or not this would violate historic designation status was raised by a homeowner.) Julia Claypool will "break out"

the invoices into the 13 accounts to monitor the payments through the year in order to see if there are periods when costs are abnormally high and if so to find out the cause of these high costs.

Engleking also needs to indicate the specific building for which work is performed on in his invoices.

Steve Navar reported that Engleking is contracted for 15 hours of maintenance work a week and that they usually exceed this number of hours. He indicated that the maintenance crew “knows the community” and does a good job in making repairs.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

There was a question about item #3 in the income statements involving the landscape funds. Mr. Navar indicated that the discrepancy was due to receiving the invoice at the end of the last fiscal year but that this invoice will be posted to reflect expenditure in last year’s budget before an audit is completed. (Lori Olivas asked for copies of all paid landscape invoices.) An electrical bill for repairing lighting for a total of \$6,600 will also be posted on the last fiscal year expenditures.

There was an issue involving the printing of the Reserves Study @ \$155 for 5 copies and a late fee attached to the bill. A concern was raised about previous board members who had not returned copies of the reserve study as it was costly to reproduce the document.

Ms. Claypool said that she would arrange a meeting with Jayne Mayne of the Finance Committee to go over the budgeting process as it relates to the Reserve Study and future board expenditures

Ms. Birtwistle indicated that there had been problems with invoices being turned in late (over a year late in at least one instance). Maintenance invoices need to have a shorter turn around time for payment.

Seth Low asked Manager Steve Navar to prepare a list of capital maintenance projects and to prioritize them by the October board meeting.

Ms. Birtwistle was concerned that Seal Engineering had not completed it prioritized listing for such items as sidewalk repairs, stair repairs (Ct. 7), and stoop masonry repairs. She wanted the repairs to the stairs between Ct. 7 and 15 completed in the next few weeks. Also curbing in Ct. 13 needs immediate attention. She recommended that Steve Navar “audition” some contractors for smaller cement/ masonry repairs before letting a contract for work of a larger scope.

### **Landscape Committee Report**

Lori Olivas submitted a written report of grounds activities with 2 proposals for board approval.

The board of directors voted 3 – 0 to approve \$1,930 to Thrive for tree work and \$1,440 to Environmental Enhancements for King Street hedge work (pruning and debris removal).

Also cited were concerns about the still existing satellite dish in Ct. 12 and why it had not been removed. (Fern replied that she was now more familiar with “due process” document; that 2 previous letters had been sent to the owner (confirmed by Mr. Navar); that the resident needs to appear before the board; and that failure to comply will result in the board levying fines per the “due process” document.

Another concern raised by Ms. Olivas was the front flower bed modification in Ct. 13 (Peters’ residence) without prior approval. Fern commented on the previous problems of the lighted snowman and the inappropriate gravel in this same bed.

Ms. Olivas said she would follow up on the concern about the resident’s bed in Ct. 12.

Ms. Olivas said that management needs to send a letter to all residents explaining the residents’ responsibilities regarding landscape. Julia Claypool volunteered to work on this. The board was reminded that such information already exists and it had been approved by a previous board and published in the March 2005 newsletter for all residents and co-owners. A copy of this document was given to the board by Ms. Olivas.

Ms. Birtwistle indicated that the patios needed to come under closer scrutiny, especially overgrowth and inappropriate trees that constitute a height violation, according to the Mews Handbook March 1999. She also said the board should study the possibility of passing a regulation requiring all residents to meet patio standards as set forth in the handbook and also the standards for the flower beds before a sale could take place. A question was raised about “who” approves sales documents and how these guidelines for patio/ beds would be enforced.

Ms. Olivas indicated the need to repair the “holes” behind Ct. 13 and that these had been reported earlier with no resulting work. Mr. Navar said he would follow up with Leslie tomorrow (September 27).

Steve Navar was asked with what frequency he “walks” the grounds. Fern said he needs to get out in the community and that residents had remarked to her that they had never seen him on grounds.

Ms. Birtwistle raised a concern about the Arlington County street trees, especially those along S. 36<sup>th</sup> St. Tom Corbin said that he had been in touch with Arlington County personnel, i.e. Mary Pierce, and had documented with several reminders the trees bordering the Mews which need attention.

### **Recreation Committee Report**

No member of the recreation committee was present. Concerns were raised about the proposed “tot” lot renovation and the proposal to repair the basketball hoop. Resident Penny Glass remarked that the hoop is used by residents.

World Pool (pool maintenance contractor) has winterized the pool according to Steve Navar. Ms. Birtwistle reminded him to make sure the water valves were shut off, marked to remain shut off, so that the problem of last year (winterizing twice) did not reoccur.

### **Newsletter Committee**

Ms. Birtwistle indicated that the board appreciated the work of the committee in producing the most recent newsletter with little cooperation from management and the board.

She requested that Steve include an article on maintenance projects proposed, completed, etc. in the next newsletter. She also requested information from management be included about the Reserves Study.

### **Management Issues**

When will projects, such as roofing, begin? Mr. Navar needs to put these projects “in gear”, solicit bids for work, etc. It was repeated that management needs to produce a list of prioritized projects from the Reserve Study recommendations for the October board meeting.

Approval of the Snow Removal contract was delayed to the October meeting.

The “roof study” was included in the last board package. There was a concern about how the engineering firm “examines” the roofs without going onto them. A question was asked about whether or not Leslie of Engle King inspects with regularity for loose slate.

At approximately 8: 35PM the board voted to go into executive session on a “dog” matter.

Respectfully submitted

Tom Corbin  
4624 S. 34<sup>th</sup> St.