

BEACON HILL TOWNHOMES

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2016

Message from Terri Lacoff, Council Treasurer

Upon election to Council in October 2014, BHTC was facing some financial challenges. Our community was on the path of spending more than we were bringing in. A significant increase in our community insurance policy was expected as a result of a fire insurance claim, our property management fees and maintenance expenditures were high, and Unit Owners with historical condo fee delinquencies were not being addressed.

Unfortunately, recent and/or current economic conditions are having an effect on our condo fee income. I felt an increase in the monthly condo fee could result in a larger delinquency problem, not to mention reduce our property values. Therefore, reducing our operating expenses was an immediate priority.

I am happy to report we have been overwhelmingly successful in reducing our costs in property management fees, property maintenance/repairs, and snow and landscaping services. Unfortunately, much of these savings have been countered by a significant increase to our insurance premium. Hopefully, our insurance will not drastically increase again in August 2016.

Nevertheless, my 2016 Budget was approved, and the condo fee has remained at \$195. But even with tight control in spending, it is imperative we collect the condo fee income and associated legal fees due from delinquent Unit Owners. In that regard, I have been working, and will continue to work with Conway Management and our Attorney in our collection matters.

Message from BHTC Council

Our reduced management fee was negotiated on the basis Council has an active role in our community affairs. Accordingly, Council requests you do not burden our Property Manager with minor issues or inquiries that your Council Members can help you with. In addition, please refrain from calling Conway Management (Conway) to ask why your condo payment check has not been cashed. When Conway receives your payment it will be date stamped as received. Conway manages the bank deposits in accordance to volume received. Therefore, your check could be held many days after receipt. But as long as your payment is received within the grace period, no late fee will be assessed. In that regard, Council would like to remind everyone, the condo fee payment is **due the 1st of the month**, not the 15th. First class postal service is reliable, but not guaranteed. Accordingly, we strongly suggest you make your payment before, on, or close to the 1st of the month to give sufficient time for delivery in the rare event delivery is delayed. Any payment received after the grace period that cannot be proven to be a failure on the part of the Post Office will result in a \$20 late fee. No exceptions or courtesy waivers will be made.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND REFERENCE

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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PROPERTY MANAGER

Please be advised Conway Management Group has relocated their offices, but is still receiving our mail at this location until further notice. Telephone calls are being forwarded.

Conway Management Group, LLC
814 N. Walnut Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
302-425-0250
302-425-0458 (fax)

Christine Roberts, Administrative Assistant
christine@conwayllc.com

Jim Conway, Account Manager
jim@conwayllc.com

Please visit our community website for our latest information, BHTC governing documents, notices, etc.

Registration is required for access to restricted areas for unit owners only.

beaconhillcondos.org

Website by Neighborhood Link

Council is in need of a volunteer to serve with us in the capacity of Council-At-Large. You must be a unit owner in good standing with an understanding of our governing documents.

Snow Management

HOW SALT WORKS

Changing ice or snow into water requires heat from the air, the sun, the pavement, or traffic friction.

As we know, the freezing point of water is 32 degrees Fahrenheit. At this temperature, water's molecules organize themselves into crystal structures, becoming ice. Salt, though, interrupts this crystallizing process because it breaks up into separate molecules of sodium and chloride when it hits water.

Sodium and chloride move throughout the water and take up space within the structure of molecules in the water. This pushes the water molecules apart and disrupts the ice-forming process. This, in turn, lowers the freezing point of water.

However, if temperatures get below 16 degrees Fahrenheit, salt is useless.

When temperatures drop below 16 degrees, there are chemicals that work well for de-icing, particularly potassium acetate, which is effective for temperatures as low as -75 degrees Fahrenheit. However, these chemicals cost a lot more money than simple salt.

We have contracted again with Jay Landscaping for our snow maintenance for accumulations starting at 2 inches. Sleet, freezing rain and icy snow conditions under 2 inches will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Since snow service will not commence unless accumulations reach 2 inches, Council strongly suggest unit owners purchase a bag of sand, kitty litter or ice melt for their sidewalks. Rock salt **is not** to be used on the sidewalks as it disintegrates the concrete.

Landscaping

Unit Owners and tenants are responsible for maintaining the landscaping around the perimeter of their unit. The landscapers are contracted to trim the shrubbery.

As has been customary for quite a few years now, Unit Owners may "opt-out" of having their shrubbery trimmed by our landscaper. It is required that if you wish to opt out of having your shrubbery automatically trimmed in early summer and mid fall, you must complete the *Landscaping Opt-Out* form EACH year, and **submit it to our property management company by May 1st**. Opt-Out forms from previous years will NOT be accepted. The *Landscaping Opt-Out* form can be found on our community website, beaconhillcondos.org.

Excessive weed growth in the front beds is not permitted. If a Unit Owner (after being issued written notice), continues to neglect their garden beds and/or shrubby, Council will instruct the landscapers to maintenance the area, regardless as to whether there is a *Landscaping Opt-Out* form on file. The Unit Owner will not be assessed for overgrown shrubbery that has to be trimmed, but they will be assessed the cost for the weeding of the garden beds.

Keep in mind, although our community encourages gardening, that does not give Unit Owners or tenants the right to remove shrubs or trees or make new plantings prior to obtaining written approval from Council. Additionally, under no circumstances are Unit Owners or tenants permitted to make landscaping changes to the common elements.

Unit Owners should be aware that any shrubbery planted (existing or new by you) is the property of Beacon Hill and not owned by the Unit Owner. All the Unit Owner owns is the inter space of the dwelling. Anything planted or constructed on an Owner's limited common ground is not owned by the Unit Owner, but may be required to be MAINTAINED by the Unit Owner.

**Message from
Palmatary's Sanitation Services**

The recycling container IS NOT to be used for ordinary trash.

**Need a Property Repair?
Have a Complaint or Concern?**

Before calling the Property Manager, please contact all or one of your Council Members. Your Council Members are actively involved in community operations and will see to it your repairs and/or concerns are addressed.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

As you may have noticed, a professional patch was done at the entrance of Overlook Drive in June 2015. At the time of these repairs, Council was aware there was a high possibility we were going to have to repave a significant portion of Overlook Drive in the near future.

Recently, we developed two pot holes that were patched by Council Members, Terri and Dick.

With the latest holes and overall deterioration of the road, rather than continuing to patch holes as they develop, Council most likely will elect to have a half section of the road spanning from West to East Court repaved this coming Spring/Summer.

This expenditure, which will be quite significant, will be funded from our Reserves Account.

**WINTERIZE
Protect your Pipes**

Turn off the inside water supply valves to your outside garden faucets.

The front faucet valve should be located in the ceiling joist in the unfinished (laundry room) area of the basement in the vicinity of where the outdoor faucet is located.

The rear faucet could be located in a removable ceiling panel in the finished part of the basement. It could be located in far left corner ceiling at the back wall that parties to the unfinished part of the basement.

After shutting off these valves, make sure you turn on the outside valves to drain any remaining water in the pipe.

Then turn the faucet halfway open/closed. This will allow any frozen water still in the pipe between the valve and the faucet spigot to expand as it thaws; otherwise you could experience a burst pipe and leak when the water is turned back on in the spring.

*Please be aware that BHTC is **NOT** responsible to repair any burst pipes, spigots and/or resulting water damage to the dwelling if a frozen pipe or joint bursts. That will be YOUR responsibility.*