

THE MANOR MONITOR

A Monthly Publication of The Vint Hill Manor Homeowners Association
March 2010 (www.vinthillmanor.org)

Annual Membership Meeting Info in this Issue

Board of Directors' Monthly Meeting

The February 2010 meeting of the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Vint Hill Manor Homeowners Association (HOA) was held on Tuesday, the 2nd, in the Conference Room at the Vint Hill Conservancy/ EDA offices at 4263 Aiken Drive. The regular, monthly BOD meetings are open and all members are invited to attend.

At the beginning of each monthly meeting, there is an opportunity for members to make comments and/or present questions for the BOD's consideration, as well as advise concerns, or offer ideas. Minutes of the previous meeting, as well as current financial statements, are made available to all attendees. Significant items addressed at the meeting are covered in the Newsletter.

President's Column

Possible Gas Billing Error

"The following note was sent via email earlier this month. Since then, at least three of our owners have received refunds from NOVEC (mine was for \$106).

Please check and compare the backs of your Columbia Gas **bills for December and January**. If the price of gas listed under *Novec Energy Solutions went up significantly in January*, it is probably an error. Columbia Gas buys their gas from NOVEC and said **they only pass on whatever they are charged**. NOVEC admitted that there might be a few errors and asked that we fax the front and back of our Columbia Gas bills to 703-392-1546 to the attention of 'Sabrina.' If you do not have a fax, copy the front and back of your January Columbia Gas bill and mail them to NOVEC Energy Solutions, 10323 Lomond Drive, Manassas, VA 20109, ATTN: Sabrina."

E-Mail Communication

Several times within the past year, emergencies have created the need to communicate quickly with the community. The first was when The Fauquier County WSA had a broken water pump (one of two) in one of the wells that supplies water for our homes. They asked me to ask all of the residents to cut back on the use of water so that we would not overload the remaining pump and lose the use of that well. The latest emergency was the record-breaking series of snow storms that occurred this month. If you are not getting emergency email bulletins and would like to receive them, please send an email with the Subject 'Add me' to fafuerst@earthlink.net. This is a service that you can unsubscribe to at any time by sending an email to me with the Subject "Unsubscribe"

Frank Fuerst
Warrenton, VA
540-341-1473
fafuerst@earthlink.net
www.dementiacaregiving.com

ARMI

The Austin Realty Management and Investment Company (ARMI), as part of its service under contract to the Vint Hill Manor HOA, is positioned to serve as a liaison between the community and the BOD and/or the ARC members. **Fred Austin**, owner of ARMI, advises that direct contact with his company results in all BOD and ARC members, as the case may dictate, being advised.

ARMI's address, where our monthly HOA assessments are sent, is: PO Box 3413, Warrenton, VA 20188. Phone: 540-347-1901, Fax: 540-347-1900
Website: www.ARMIVA.com.

Architectural Review Committee (ARC) Activity

Steve Chronister, ARC Chair, reported that, at the ARC meeting on January 26, the Committee approved one new Design Review Application. Also, through the effort of ARC member Jenny Snellings, the Committee reviewed and approved a Design Request Application for one of the outstanding unapproved modifications. Consequently, of the unapproved modifications carried through 2009, only 1 lot (1 unapproved modification) remains non-compliant.

The Committee also reviewed all documents pertaining to the 16 unreported modifications noted during the November 23rd drive-around assessment of all homes in the Community. After categorizing the modifications, the Committee agreed on methods to review and approve these modifications. For most of the modifications, the Committee will create Design Review Applications and, through personal interaction, will encourage homeowners to sign the applications for review and approval.

For other unreported modifications, specifically Front Porch Step Railings, the Committee could not readily determine if the railings were installed at move-in or shortly thereafter. After considering the usefulness and safety value of the railings, and reviewing the photographs of pre-existing conditions, the Committee decided to create a categorical approval for the railings of the four affected homeowners.

* **The next ARC meeting** is set for Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 7:00 PM, at the home of Steve Chronister, 6828 Averbach Court.

The ARC is always more than ready and willing to meet with any homeowner to provide guidance and/or assistance with the necessary application(s) which are required for exterior modifications to our homes. In a spirit of

cooperation, please help the ARC reach its goal of Complete Compliance! **Manor Pride!**

Planning some changes – give Steve a call at 428-1828

Common Grounds Initiatives

At the BOD meeting in January, **Frank Fuerst**, Acting Chair of the Common Grounds Committee (CGC), noted that, due to inclement weather, he had been unable to check out the wetlands area behind the homes on Averbach Ct to determine if Ruppert had completed the clean-up operation. **Mark Melancon** and **Tom Daily** agreed to walk through the area and conduct the inspection on Wednesday, January 6, 2010, which they did. At the February BOD meeting, Mark reported that, although he and Tom had surveyed the area, he was really not able to provide a meaningful report on any work that still needed to be done due to the conditions complicated by the snowfall. Mark hopes to review the area again in the coming weeks once the conditions are conducive to being able to more accurately determine any clean-up actions still required.

Available Position

Anyone interested in finding out more about the CGC Chair position is encouraged to give Frank a call at 341-1473, or send him an e-mail at – fafuerst@earthlink.net.

AARP Driver Safety Program

Bill Dumas advised that he has been in touch with the hospital in Warrenton and found they will be offering the above two day program in the near future – March 23 and March 25 from 10AM to 3PM each day in the Sycamore Room at the hospital. The AARP rate is \$12. To sign up or get more information, call 540-316-3588.

New Look and Feel for the Newsletter

At the February BOD meeting, during the membership comment period, a question was raised, that reportedly had been discussed among a number of member neighbors, concerning the quality of paper on which *The Manor Monitor* was being printed. Also the necessity for colored graphics and the associated cost for such was brought into question. There was no complaint as to the aesthetics of the publication; rather, the question was directed to the high degree of paper and the use of color for an item that, perhaps, in a number of cases, is not even read, and, in all cases, is discarded. There is no need to have archival level quality was the sentiment expressed.

Some discussions, subsequent to the meeting, also brought up for question the need for the various articles that are not directly pertinent to the operations of the HOA. Since the sources for those articles was always cited, a comment was made that, perhaps, the members have already read those articles in their original publications, such as the AARP Newsletter, for one example.

Certainly every aspect of HOA operations is, and should be, subject to question and review to ensure the membership is getting the most value for its investments. The fact that our HOA is fortunate to be in a very solvent financial position (see the Treasurer's Annual Report in this issue), is no excuse for any of its funds to be unnecessarily spent.

When the newsletter started, the main reason for it was to provide information to the membership as to what was happening in the community and what actions were being taken at the monthly BOD meetings so that everyone could be aware and informed. After seeing the publications of some of the other 55+ communities, it was decided to include some additional articles and to make the publication

more aesthetically appealing.

Research that was done, in the interim since the February BOD meeting, determined that the use of the color graphics was the major factor in the overall cost of the publication. There would be some savings involved in the use of a lower grade of paper; but, they are minimal compared to the difference in the cost of doing the publication in just black and white versus in color. The monthly cost for the newsletter in color and with the high grade of paper was \$180 (rounded).

Going to a lower grade of paper only reduces this amount by, at most, \$8. However, going to a publication without the use of color could reduce the monthly cost to \$60 (rounded) if plain white offset paper is used, which is how this issue was done and, it is intended, those in the future will be done. The cost to have the publication resemble a book (identified as 'one fold') versus just having pages stapled together is very minimal – approximately \$5; so there is no intention to change that aspect.

In addition to making the changes to the color and the quality of the paper, the focus is being shifted back to the original purpose of the newsletter; therefore the content will be limited to those items pertinent to the HOA and its operations.

It should be further noted that there is no lock on the editor's position of this publication. If anyone is interested in taking this on, please contact the BOD or ARMI and let them know. In addition, if it is the express feeling of the membership that the newsletter is not needed at all, that could easily be accommodated as well, as there is no HOA regulation that requires it.

We now need someone to step forward and assume the production task which **Bob McConahy** is no longer going to be performing since our expectations of the nature of the publication has been changed.

Further Clarification of the Trash/Recycling Collection Situation

The January issue of the newsletter contained an article entitled Recyclables Collection which was intended to explain the change to how our contractor, Culpeper Trash, is collecting the recyclable materials. A question raised at the January BOD meeting, and some questions raised subsequent to that meeting, suggest that further clarification is needed, as well, perhaps, as some detailed background.

The main change was to the way our recyclables are now being collected. **There is NO change to the collection of our trash.** Heretofore, for the collection of the recyclable materials, Culpeper used a truck with a multi-bin container system and the recyclables were sorted by the Culpeper crew as they were being collected. This was a requirement at the facility to which they were originally being taken. Also, we were requested to separate the various categories of recyclable items when we put them out for collection to facilitate the operation of the Culpeper crew.

The recent change to the process was that the recyclables are now just being collected, without being separated, and placed in a truck that is more like a regular, compactor trash truck, i.e., the recyclables do not need to be sorted as they are being collected because the recycling facility to which these items are now being taken does the sorting at the site. It is a much larger facility.

Another question that was raised concerned the fees that we are paying for the services being rendered by Culpeper. On the surface, it appeared that the difference in the fees had to do with the fact that the process for collecting the recyclables was more labor intensive initially, when the Culpeper crew did the sorting, which is not the case, per **Mr.**

Greg Freeman, VP of Culpeper Trash.

To review, the cost of having two trash pickups (which is what we used to have) was \$19 per lot per month. Going to one trash pickup and one recycling pickup, the fee went up to \$21 per lot per month. The increase was not so much a matter of the labor intensive aspect; rather it was a result of other factors:

* To do the recycling, Culpeper had to hire another worker, who is still necessary, regardless of what process and/or kind of truck is being used to collect the recyclables.

* Also, Culpeper purchased a new truck to take on the recyclables collection, which is still being paid for. When the change was made to the way the recyclables were being collected, Mr. Freeman was able to make a change to the part that goes on the back of the truck, i.e., from the multi-bin to the compactor type.

A few years ago, when the economy was in better shape, Culpeper was able to get some money back on the recyclables. In the interim, as the economy deteriorated so did the markets on the recyclables. At the place they had been taking the recyclables, they still were required to do sorting before being able to drop the materials off, and they were not getting anything back. Then Culpeper found that they could take the recyclables to another facility, which is much larger, and which does the sorting on-site. Culpeper still is not getting any return on the items; but, at least they do not have to do the sorting. This saves time and is safer for the workers, as they do not have to handle the materials as much. There is more of a distance to travel to this other facility (Gainesville area); so, there is a bit of a trade-off there; but, it is felt it is a better deal in the long run.

Other factors that Mr. Freeman mentioned are that he has kept the

prices down, over the last couple of years, in spite of the market for recyclables tanking (not that he was ever making that much to begin with) and the price of fuel increasing. There was no pressure exerted to commit him to keeping the prices down, come the next contract period; but, he did express that he hoped we would understand and that he wants to keep our business.

Another inquiry concerned the topic of 'tipping' (dumping) fees. Mr. Freeman advised that there is a tipping fee for trash; but, not for the recyclables.

Empty Printer Cartridges Wanted for Recycling

This is a perfect segue to provide information on how empty computer printer cartridges can be recycled. These items are not among the categories that Culpeper collects. **Richard and Carole Taylor** advise that their church, the Oak Dale Baptist Church, is collecting these items for recycling. The empty cartridges can be dropped off at the Taylor residence – 3572 Sutherland Ct. Questions can be sent via e-mail to – callmrdj@msn.com, or calls can be made to 703-437-0434 (cell).

Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Vint Hill Manor HOA will be held Tuesday, March 2, 2010, at the **Greenville Elementary School, 7389 Academic Avenue**. Out of our community, make a Right onto Rogues Rd, and make a Left at the first/only traffic light, which is Academic Avenue and proceed down until you come to the elementary school on the right. As indicated on the flyer in the package provided by ARMI, **the doors will open at 6:30PM for registration and the meeting will begin at 7:00PM.**

The main event at this year's meeting will be the election of a member to fill one (1) seat on the BOD. Last month's Manor Monitor had an article about the upcoming meeting and vacancy, and solicited the names of interested candidates and bios by February 9, 2010, to ensure being placed on the ballot provided in the ARMI package. Currently there is one nominee for the position, **Ken Williamson**, and his bio is provided below. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting. As a common courtesy, it would be appropriate to check with someone to get his/her approval before submitting his/her name in nomination. A homeowner, interested in serving, also may submit his/her own name.

The package provided by ARMI contained the 'official' notice of the meeting with detailed information concerning voting instructions and proxy voting. The agenda for the Annual Meeting is contained in this issue of the newsletter, as is the agenda for the short meeting of the new BOD which will follow immediately and, at which time, the HOA Officer positions will be determined, by the BOD, for the ensuing year.

If you have not done so yet, please fill out and return the proxy that was enclosed in the aforementioned package. This is necessary, even if you plan to attend the meeting, to ensure a quorum, which is a requirement to conduct business at the meeting. The proxy may be used for purposes of attendance only, or you may designate someone to cast votes for you if you know in advance that you will be unable to attend. Homeowners also may vote using the enclosed 'mail-in' ballot. ***If you have any questions about any aspect of the use of the proxy or the ballot, please contact ARMI at 347-1901.***

In His Own Words

My name is **Ken Williamson** and I have been a resident of Vint Hill Manor since November 2005. I would appreciate for my name to come under consideration for the vacant position on the Board of Directors.

I grew up in Northern Virginia, graduated from Annandale High School in 1967 and attended George Mason University. I worked part time at Giant Food as a Produce Clerk to pay for my college tuition, books and spending money. My wife Cheryl and I married at the age of 22 and we are now proud grandparents to Logan, age 6 years, and Jeffrey, age 3 years.

My entire working career consisted of working for one company, Giant Food, Inc. During and after college I was a union associate for Giant working as a Produce Clerk, Produce Manager, and Assistant Store Manager. In 1979 I was promoted to Store Manager. For the next 27 years I managed approximately a dozen store operations in the Northern Virginia area. The scope of these operations ranged from the small store to the very large volume business stores. As a Manager my responsibilities for the operation included budgets, sales, payroll, merchandising, human resources, labor relations, and customer service. I hope my experience in these areas will allow me to serve our community on the Board of Directors.
Sincerely,
Ken Williamson

Vint Hill Manor Homeowners' Association Annual Membership Meeting Agenda March 02, 2010

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Minutes of 2009 Annual Meeting**
- 3. Election of One Director**
- 4. Financial/Treasurer's Report for 2009**
- 5. President's Report for 2009**
- 5. Membership Comment Period**
- 6. Adjournment**

Vint Hill Manor Homeowners' Association Board of Directors' Meeting Agenda March 02, 2010

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Election of HOA Officers**
- 3. Minutes of Previous BOD Meeting**
- 4. Financial/Treasurer's Report**
- 5. Adjournment**

Annual Committee Reports
To save time at the Annual Meeting, the Annual Reports of the various Committees are provided below. The Financial/Treasurer's Report is provided as well; but, also will be presented at the meeting.

Architectural Review and Covenants – Steve Chronister
After the February 2009 ARC meeting, 5 homes in the Community had a total of 6 unapproved modifications. During the past year, thanks to dedicated ARC Members and thoughtful Homeowners, the ARC approved 24 new modifications and reduced the beginning unapproved list to 1 home with 1 unapproved modification. However, the traditional Board of Directors Walk-Around (this year it was a Drive-Around) assessment that was delayed to November 2009 identified an additional 15 homes with 16 unapproved modifications.

Consequently, ARC approval activity will continue in March 2010 with outreach to the 16 homeowners who have a total of 17 unapproved modifications.

Common Grounds – Frank Fuerst

To better understand our Land Bay G, we first obtained three large detailed ‘as built’ plats of our land bay and did a ‘cut and paste’ that resulted in a single 3’ x 3’ sheet. To our surprise, we discovered that our land bay was smaller than anyone had supposed. We also found that the largest common area within our land bay was one outside the path between the forest and the wetlands near the FAA.

We next formed a partnership with the Conservancy and the other HOA to develop specifications for a new maintenance contract. In the course of negotiations, we rid ourselves of the maintenance of areas outside our land bay. Since the large area referred to above saw little or no use by us, we excluded it from our contract. As a result of all of our actions, we saved more than \$5000 for 2009 and every year hereafter.

The new contract given to Ruppert Landscaping had quality control provisions calling for monthly inspections by the OLM Corporation to see that the provisions of the contract were met. We divided our land bay into ten parts, and ten of our owners volunteered to provide input regarding quality. Using their input and personal observation, we accompanied OLM on each inspection. We sometimes found other issues on these inspections. The net result was that quality improved dramatically.

We also tackled some long-standing common area issues. We contracted with Ruppert to fertilize and spray between the homes on Averbach and the wetlands, and to push a dam aside (log and debris) to alleviate the flooding of owner backyards behind Averbach. To correct drainage problems behind the Owen home, we formed a

partnership with Ruppert, who added underground drainage and sod, and the Owen family, who watered the sod. To correct an area along the path, we formed another partnership with Ruppert, who dug up an old roadway and re-seeded, and the Johnson family, who watered until the seed was established.

Communications – Tom Daily

The *Manor Monitor* was produced each month and provided to every home. Much credit is due **Bob McConahy** for the tireless effort he put into the production end of the publication. **Don Brettle** also is due much credit for the time and effort he put into maintaining the Vint Hill Manor web site. He posted the newsletter to the site each month and he updated the HOA documents, especially the project undertaken by **Stan Manvell** in which he converted all the HOA documents into a format that enabled them to be put on the website. Don kept the calendar current as well as the contacts and resources per BOD requests.

Programs – Mark Melancon

During 2009 the HOA Program Committee organized irrigation turn-on, driveway sealing, irrigation turn-off, and power-washing of homes. Additional power-washing will be done in the spring. Presently the possible utilization of Neighborhood Watch in our community is being studied. There has been a request for termite treatment of our homes, because most of us have been here for about 5 years.

Financial/Treasurer’s Report – Ed Ortiz

Fellow Homeowners,

As the Association Treasurer, I am pleased to report that thanks to the stewardship of Frank Fuerst (President) and the honest brokering and support of the Board of Directors, the Vint Hill Manor Home Owners Association (HOA) has had a very successful and financially solvent 2009 as noted

below:

First, our total assets in CDs, Checking, Accounts Receivable, and Reserve increased from the previous year (2008) by \$7, 378.28. It is presumed that these accounts will continue to grow in 2010 at the same annual average interest rates as in the previous two years, 2008 and 2009.

Second, our total income out paced our total expenses for calendar year 2009. This resulted in a surplus of \$9, 655.69 that was passed on to our community by lowering the HOA monthly assessments from \$50 to \$45 in January 2010. The BOD does not envision lowering these assessments any further in 2010.

Third, the BOD was able to fund a number of important community common grounds projects in 2009, such as: OLM, Ruppert Contract (mowing, aerating, seeding, fertilizing), the Averbach Court Wetlands clean up, and homeowner drainage issues.

As reported above, the Vint Hill Manor HOA stands in very good financial shape. The BOD has worked very hard to ensure that our bills are paid and that any surplus is used or passed along in the form of lowering your HOA monthly assessments or community capital improvements.

VINT HILL MANOR HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION P.O. Box 3413 WARRENTON, VA 20188

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